

LONDON (R) — As fans queued all night for a glimpse of the happy 95th birthday of the Queen Mother, the royal favourite royal to the oak tree. "She is a person and she believes when she is around they normally do," camera shop manager Butler outside the Queen Mum. The Queen Mother, recovering from cataract operation and times forced into a chair by her failing health, maintained her popularity throughout the 60 years for the House of Windsor. She hosted a luncheon Friday for three well-wishers singing happy birthday outside her home, military gun salute at Tower of London. Hughes, Britain's bard as poet laureate to the Queen Mother, is the oak tree who has seen the strength of the through two world wars, century that began her birth. "The years in my carry the strength of the tree and the strength of grace," he said in a poem. Mother, propelled in the limelight with her late George when King George VIII abdicated in 1936, married an American who won the hearts of a when comforting bomb victims in World War II.

Yoko to sing for Hiroshima with McCartney

TOKYO (AP) — Ono, the widow of Beatle member John, will unveil a new song for Hiroshima on the 30th anniversary of the atomic bombing of the Japanese city. Yoko Ono and Paul McCartney will perform the song "Hiroshima Sky" at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. The song is a tribute to the victims of the atomic bombing and is written in Japanese. McCartney will play the guitar and Ono will sing. The performance is part of a series of events to mark the 30th anniversary of the bombing.

Socialite: Ramon is sexiest man in the Philippines

MANILA (R) — President Fidel Ramos was named the sexiest man in the Philippines by a social magazine. The magazine, "Socialite," ranked Ramos as the most attractive man in the country. Ramos is a popular figure in the Philippines and is known for his charm and good looks. The magazine's ranking is based on a survey of the public's opinion.

More suspects to be indicted in Oklahoma City bombing: report

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Additional suspects have been identified in the Oklahoma City truck bombing and will be indicted within the next week, a newspaper reported Saturday. John Magaw, director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), told the Daily Oklahoman that the suspects would be indicted by a federal grand jury investigating the April 19 blast that destroyed a federal building and killed 168 people. "I believe right now they've all been identified and, if they're not in custody, we know where they are," Mr. Magaw said. So far, only two people have been charged in the bombing — Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols — who met while serving in the army. Authorities initially expressed doubt that McVeigh could have masterminded the bombing, but Magaw said that in the case the government has built against him "he is not going to be a foot soldier."

Jordan Times

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Croatian army conquer Serb stronghold Bosnian troops join offensive

ZAGREB, Croatia (AP) — Backed by a dawn artillery barrage, Croatian army troops marched into the Serb stronghold of Knin on Saturday, seizing what had been the heart of the 4-year-old Serb rebellion. Residents had fled Knin, leaving it virtually deserted when Croatian troops entered late Saturday morning. Refugees headed northeast towards neighbouring Serb-held Bosnia. U.N. aid officials said they were preparing for about 30,000 refugees. "Almost the only people remaining were the dead and the dying," Maj. Alan Balfour, a U.N. spokesman, said by telephone from Knin. Also, for the first time Saturday, U.N. officials said Bosnian troops in the northwest Bihać enclave crossed the international border between the two countries. Bosnian troops pushed west as Croat troops pushed east, closing in from two sides on the Serb-held Slunj area. James Kanu, a U.N. spokesman in the area, refused to say how many Bosnian troops were involved. Mr. Balfour said sporadic firing continued in the streets of Knin, about 200 kilometres south of Zagreb, after the army entered about 11 a.m. (0900 GMT), but that Croat troops appeared to be consolidating their hold. Earlier, Croatian officials said the distinctive Croatian checkerboard flag — for Serbs a hated emblem of Croatian rule — had been hoisted above the 13th century citadel that dominates Knin's landscape. The second day of attacks on Knin resumed with full

fury around dawn Saturday. Susan Angle, a U.N. official in Zagreb, said a shell landed just 100 metres from the U.N. headquarters in Knin early Saturday, killing seven civilians and wounding 11 others huddled nearby. Two Czech peacekeepers also died Saturday after an attack on their U.N. observation post near Gospić, a major staging point of the offensive northwest of Knin, said Alan Roberts, another U.N. spokesman in Knin. Mr. Balfour said the Croatian troops were in front of the U.N. compound, about one kilometre north of the town centre, but that they had agreed not to enter if U.N. troops stayed put. The whereabouts of the rebel Serb leaders, who were headquartered in Knin, was unknown, Mr. Balfour said. Presumably they, too, had fled. With tanks and soldiers on the streets of Knin, the Croats advanced from the west on other Serb-held towns. Croat jets bombed two Serb-held towns located in a stretch of territory south of Zagreb and north of the Bihać enclave. Mr. Kanu said. Thousands of Serb civilians were fleeing. Bosnian government troops, meanwhile, overran several U.N. observation posts near the border and demanded that a dozen others be abandoned, U.N. officials said. Mr. Balfour confirmed that Gracae, a town about 40 kilometres northwest of Knin, also had fallen to the Croats. There were virtually no Serb defences between the

two towns, meaning the Croats had controls of a broad swath of land north of Knin. The Croats claimed they were nearing a rebel Serb airfield at Udbina, north of Gracae, which had been used for air attacks on the northwestern Bosnian region of Bihać, bordering Croatia. The Croatian and Bosnian governments strengthened their military alliance two weeks ago, ostensibly to defend Bihać. But that also gave the Croatian army the green light to pour thousands of troops into Bosnia within striking distance of Zagreb. It made no secret of plans to move next on areas south of the capital and down along the Adriatic hinterland, of which Knin is the centre. Before launching its offensive at dawn Friday, Croatia rejected an 11th-hour offer from the Serbs to discuss territorial reintegration — the first time they ever had made such a proposal. The Croats rolled through U.N. zones at various points, and peacekeepers said several of their positions were deliberately attacked. One Danish peacekeeper died, two Poles were wounded and at least 90 peacekeepers were detained in various Croat attacks and artillery and aerial bombardments on U.N. observation posts on Friday. Those detained included 43 Canadians taken at gunpoint by the Croats to the Adriatic port of Zadar, said Lt. Cmdr. Jeff Agnew, a Canadian military spokesman in Zagreb. Croatian foreign minister Mate Granic, optimistic that the Croats' 100,000 well-armed men would triumph against 50,000 well-equipped rebels, said he expected the offensive to be finished in a week. In an interview Saturday with the Associated Press, Mr. Granic pledged human

the stalled peace process in a very short time. Croatia, tired of waiting for the United Nations to reintegrate the one-third of rebel-held land as required by a 1992 mandate, attacked first in May, regaining a chunk of territory southeast of Zagreb. It made no secret of plans to move next on areas south of the capital and down along the Adriatic hinterland, of which Knin is the centre. Before launching its offensive at dawn Friday, Croatia rejected an 11th-hour offer from the Serbs to discuss territorial reintegration — the first time they ever had made such a proposal. The Croats rolled through U.N. zones at various points, and peacekeepers said several of their positions were deliberately attacked. One Danish peacekeeper died, two Poles were wounded and at least 90 peacekeepers were detained in various Croat attacks and artillery and aerial bombardments on U.N. observation posts on Friday. Those detained included 43 Canadians taken at gunpoint by the Croats to the Adriatic port of Zadar, said Lt. Cmdr. Jeff Agnew, a Canadian military spokesman in Zagreb. Croatian foreign minister Mate Granic, optimistic that the Croats' 100,000 well-armed men would triumph against 50,000 well-equipped rebels, said he expected the offensive to be finished in a week. In an interview Saturday with the Associated Press, Mr. Granic pledged human



A resident of the Croatian city of Split fires his gun in celebration of the capture of the rebel Serb "capital" Knin (AFP photo)

King urges Aqaba development

AOABA (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday called on the concerned authorities in the Aqaba region to give due care to the development of the port city of Aqaba and to provide all the required services that help attract tourists. Noting that the city constitutes one of the major tourism attractions in the Kingdom, King Hussein stressed the need for retaining and projecting the cultural character of the city. King Hussein was speaking at a meeting with Minister of Tourism Abdul Ilah Al Khatib and Aqaba Region Authority (ARA) President Faysal Khasawneh in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Noor. At the meeting, during which a general review of plans and projects for the development of Aqaba Region was made, King Hussein requested that special attention be given to the protection of the environment and for keeping the beaches clean and safe from pollution. King Hussein passed directives concerning the economic situation in Aqaba and the improvement of the local residents' living standards, especially the limited-income groups. Dr. Khasawneh outlined the various programmes and plans undertaken by ARA for the development of the southern coast of Aqaba for tourism purposes and the development of various lands and housing districts. He also gave

Cabinet allocates JD 259,000 for refugee camp services

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet on Saturday approved allocating JD 259,000 for committees in charge of improving services at Palestinian refugee camps. Of the total sum, JD 5,000 will be distributed to committees at each of Al Hussein, Al Wihdat, Al Sukhneh and Prince Hassan camps, JD 18,000 to Al Tadiya camp, JD 16,000 to Madaba camp, JD 40,000 to each of Hittin, Jerash and Azmi Al Mufri camps, JD 20,000 to Al Zarqa and Souf camps, JD 25,000 to Baqaa camp and JD 10,000 to Irbid camp. In its meeting under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, the Cabinet discussed the new administrative divisions draft regulation. It also approved a decision by the council of development to pay JD 500 in compensation to subscribers to car telephone services. The compensation will be paid in January 1996 to about 1,200 subscribers. The council of ministers decided also to allow international news agencies and television networks to bring into the Kingdom satellite receivers and transmitters to be used during the Amman Economic Summit in the end of October free of charge.

Afghanistan wants worldwide ban on land mines

KABUL (AP) — Afghanistan, a country awash in millions of land mines, on Saturday called for a worldwide ban on the production, export and stockpiling of land mines. The United Nations estimates at least 10 million land mines are scattered throughout Afghanistan, the legacy of 16 years of war. Mine-clearing agencies in the war-ravaged capital estimate that 20 Afghans are injured or killed each day as a result of land mines.

Arafat and Peres to meet on Monday Palestinians sceptical about outcome of talks

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — A Palestinian official was sceptical Saturday that PLO Chief Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres could resolve conflicts over expanding Palestinian autonomy in their meeting next week. Labour Minister, Samir Ghosheh, told reporters that the meeting will take place in the Egyptian resort town of Taba on Monday. "But I don't think this meeting will resolve the various disputed issues," said Mr. Ghosheh after the Palestinian cabinet's weekly session. "There has been some progress, but there are still huge difficulties," he added. "The negotiations will continue and the important thing is to get results, even if that takes more time."

Israeli and PLO delegates have been conducting negotiations in the southern Israeli town of Eilat, just across the border from Taba. The two sides are trying to iron out disputes over implementing the next stage of Palestinian self-rule, including Israeli troop redeployment from areas handed over to Palestinian control and Palestinian elections for a governing council. Mr. Ghosheh said the problems included water rights, Israeli withdrawal from unpopulated areas in the West Bank and the participation of Palestinians from Jerusalem in the elections. Palestinian leaders have accused Israel of creating delays in concluding the negotiations by remaining obstinate on issues of debate. "The Palestinian authority has been as flexible as possible in the negotiations but obstacles placed by the Israeli side still prevent us from reaching an agreement," Mr. Arafat was quoted as saying in a cabinet statement issued after the meeting. Chief negotiator Saeb Erekat said that even though last week's talks were "serious and deep, this does not mean that the gaps have been bridged."



Yasser Arafat



Shimon Peres

Mr. Erekat said special security arrangements were being discussed for Hebron. He dismissed the Israeli position that the settlers could co-exist with the Palestinians in the city, where tension has run high since Jewish settler Baruch Goldstein shot to death 29 Muslim worshippers in the city's main mosque in February 1994. "Even though the purpose of the peace process is to see the reconciliation between the Palestinian and Israeli people in terms of co-existence, I know that co-existence between the Palestinian people and settlers is an impossibility," he said.

Syria says Israel refusing to resume peace talks

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria accused Israel on Saturday of refusing to resume peace talks at ambassadorial level. "Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has committed one of the biggest mistakes when he refused negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli track," the official daily Syria Times said. It gave no further details. Two Israeli newspapers reported on Thursday that Mr. Rabin had turned down a proposal by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to

resume talks between ambassadors and would only accept renewal of talks between army officers. Mr. Rabin's spokeswoman, Aliza Goren, would not confirm Mr. Christopher had made such a proposal. Syria refused last month to send its military experts to Washington for talks with their Israeli counterparts on security arrangements which would back up a proposed Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, captured by

Israel in 1967. Lieutenant General Hikmat Shihabi, Syria's army chief, and his Israeli counterpart, Lieutenant General Amonon Shahak, discussed the security arrangements in Washington in June. But the talks, covering early-warning systems, demilitarised zones and peace-keeping troops, produced no tangible results. The Syria Times repeated Syria's rejection of Israeli demands that an early warning

ground station be set up in the Golan. "Israel is seeking a very special kind of peace, which would allow Israel to continue to occupy parts of the Arab lands whether by setting up Jewish settlements or by installing Israeli controlled early warning systems," the paper said. Syria and Israel have held sporadic peace talks since 1991 but the negotiations are stalled over the fate of the Golan, security arrangements and future ties.

Hizbollah leaders seek to show united front

BAALBEK, Lebanon (AP) — Leaders of the Hizbollah guerrilla group sought Saturday to make a show of unity following reports of differences in religious dogma and strategy in the fight against Israel. No mention was made of the issues discussed at a rare public summit of top fundamentalist clerics in Beirut, a Hizbollah stronghold in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley. However, Hizbollah Secretary General Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah rejected a demand by the United States and Israel that the Iran-backed faction give up its weapons. "Our strength is in the weapons we have. To give it up means losing," Mr. Nasrallah said. The meeting also included Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah, spiritual guide of Shiite Muslim fundamentalists, and Sheikh Abi Tufail, leader of the extremist wing within the organisation. The various leaders owe allegiance to different factions within the Iranian government. Mr. Tufail is believed to favour a continued struggle against Israel until the elimination of the Jewish state. However, Mr. Nasrallah and other moderate figures appear willing to compromise after an Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon. Mr. Fadlallah, whose own relations with Tehran are reportedly strained over the religious leadership of Shiites worldwide, has stayed out of the fray and sought to keep the Lebanese fundamentalists united. Israel has demanded the Lebanese government dis-

Abul Ragheb says donors may set up Middle East Bank

AMMAN (R) — Jordan said on Saturday that a proposed \$25 billion Middle East bank to finance projects in the region may be announced at the end of next Middle East and North Africa economic summit which will be held in Amman in October. Industry and Trade Minister Ali Abul Ragheb told reporters the summit's steering committee was debating whether to announce the bank's birth as part of the meeting's final declaration. But he said the meeting may also end in choosing to establish an intermediary financial lending institution as a compromise between the United States and Europe. Washington, backed by Israel and most Arab neighbours, has lobbied for the creation of a bank to finance the economic development of the region as part of the Middle East peace process after the 1993 PLO-Israel accord. But the European Union (EU) says there are enough lending bodies in the region and argues the World Bank and the European Union's Investment Bank have already pledged \$23 billion to the region. The alternative proposal of a financial intermediary would not involve establishing a separate entity like the bank based in the region. Its role would be to mobilise funds from existing financial institutions. Mr. Abul Ragheb said the declaration would also

include the creation of other regional projects. The United States, Russia, the European Union, Japan, Canada, Egypt, the Palestinian Authority, Tunisia, Morocco and Israel are on the summit's steering committees. More than 1,000 government leaders and businessmen will attend the three-day conference, starting October 29. It is a follow-up to last November's Casablanca economic summit for North Africa and the Middle East which brought together for the first time Arab political leaders and businessmen with Israeli counterparts. Foreign businessmen will be invited, for the first time, to participate in infrastructure projects to rehabilitate the Middle East, Mr. Abul Ragheb said. Jordan, he said, will present 27 major projects, mostly infrastructure projects in water, mineral, transport, communications and tourism at an estimated cost of 13.5 billion. Multi-billion dollar projects to develop the Jordan Rift Valley along its borders with Israel, including a canal linking the Dead Sea with the Red Sea, will also be presented. Jordan will also offer 65 medium to small sized private sector projects to foreign investors. U.S. State Department senior Middle East official Robert Pelletreau has the summit said will introduce to private business leaders new commercial opportunities and projects that are opening up as a result of progress in the peace process. "We believe it should attract widespread interest and attention," he said.

Iraq says U.S. politicising issue of Kuwaiti missing

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq accused the United States and Kuwait Saturday of using the issue of Kuwaitis missing since the 1990-1991 Gulf war as a political ploy to prolong sanctions.

"The issue of missing Kuwaitis is... a political tool America and Kuwait employ to justify prolonging the sanctions," the government newspaper Al Jumhuriya said.

Gulf war ceasefire Resolution 687 linking the ban on Iraqi oil exports to full adherence to the 1991 Gulf war ceasefire terms on disarmament had "nothing to do with the missing (Kuwaitis)," it said.

President Bill Clinton said in a letter to Congress Tuesday that the United States would not lift the oil sanctions until Baghdad accounted for the missing Kuwaitis, returned Kuwaiti property and improved its human rights record.

"Clinton lies when he claims that Iraq refuses to return missing Kuwaitis and Kuwaiti property," Al Jumhuriya said.

Kuwait, backed by its ally the United States, wants Iraq to account for 600 missing Kuwaitis, among other demands, before the oil embargo can be lifted.

Al Jumhuriya said Iraq was willing to return Kuwaiti property but the Kuwaiti authorities "have frequently rejected receiving it or conducting talks on how to hand it over."

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said Friday that Kuwaiti and Iraqi officials ended a two-day meeting in Geneva on clearing up the fate of 600 people who went missing during Iraq's seven-month occupation of the emirate.

But the ICRC shed no light on whether any of the 600 cases had been resolved.

The Iraqi News Agency said in June that Iraq had dealt with 168 individual files given to it by the ICRC.

Iraq has repeatedly denied that it had any Kuwaiti detainees on its territory, but says it would do its best to investigate their fate. On Saturday, Iraq said it would do everything possible to have the sanctions eased or lifted.

Diplomats estimate the number of Britons, Saudis, Americans and French nationals missing in the conflict at about two dozen.

Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, during a visit to Kuwait Thursday, said he would ask Baghdad to step up the search for missing Kuwaitis. Iraq is a long-time ally of Moscow.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's defence minister said in remarks published Saturday the army's effectiveness was 85 per cent restored after damage caused by the Iraqi occupation of 1990-91.

Sheikh Ahmad Hamood Al Jaber Al Sabah added that Kuwait and other Gulf Arab states were considering setting up an early warning system to help bolster defences.

the English-language Arab Times quoted him as saying in an interview.

"The ability of the army is over 85 per cent now and we hope to complete the rest of the work over the coming few years," he said.

"At present the Kuwaiti army is capable of safeguarding the security of Kuwait's borders and appropriately responding to any enemy movements, supported by brothers in the GCC and friendly troops in the region."

Under a defence pact with Washington concluded after the Gulf war, U.S. weaponry is stored in Kuwait for the use of American forces who would fly in from Indian Ocean bases in case of any emergency such as Iraq's 1990 invasion.

Kuwait is a member of the Peninsula Shield defence force created by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman and Kuwait to reduce their military dependence on Western allies.

Sheikh Ahmad said the GCC economic and military alliance was studying ways to adapt the Peninsula Shield to help the region's countries become self-reliant on defence.

He added he wanted to expand the army by recruiting individuals suitable for training in high-tech weaponry.

Kuwait is gradually rebuilding its 15,000-strong armed forces following the Iraqi occupation in which most of its weaponry and equipment was looted or destroyed. It also maintains a 20,000-strong reserve force.

Iraq's army took only 12 to 18 hours to wipe out opposition from units of Kuwait's army during the 1990 invasion.

In a separate development, Kuwaiti Interior Ministry figures published Saturday showed Kuwait deported 6,560 expatriates in 1994, 4,923 of them for violating residency laws.

Others deported included people convicted of liquor offences or crimes involving immorality or theft, the figures published in the Arab Times said. Use of alcohol other than for medical purposes is banned in Kuwait.

In Kuwait, expatriates convicted of a range of crimes including residency violations are usually deported following payment of fines or completion of jail terms.

Foreigners, most of them Iraq and Asian guest workers, make up one million of the Gulf state's total 1.8 million population.

The number of crimes committed in Kuwait in 1994 rose 24 per cent to 18,969, of which 5,622 or 29 per cent were felonies and 11,654 or 61 per cent were misdemeanours. The ministry figures gave no further breakdown.

UAE judge: Retrial could be in favour of maid

AL AIN, United Arab Emirates (R) — The retrial of a 16-year-old Filipina jailed for killing an Arab employer who raped her started Saturday and the chief judge said it could be in the housemaid's favour.

"It could be in her (Sarah Balabagan's) favour," the head of the three-man bench, Chief Judge Ahmad Al Karwani, told reporters. He did not elaborate.

The court said a final verdict would be passed on Aug. 26.

UAE President Sheikh Zaid bin Sultan Al Nahayan ordered the retrial of Ms. Balabagan who was sentenced in June by a Sharia Islamic Court to seven years in prison on charges of manslaughter for stabbing her employer 34 times.

The court also concluded that she had been raped. The prosecution Saturday reiterated a demand that she be sentenced to death for murder.

Ms. Balabagan said both inside and outside the court that she killed Almas Mohammad Al Baloushi in self-defence and should be acquitted.

"It was self-defence. I was defending my honour," the maid told reporters through a translator ahead of the retrial. "I accept what I did and I have conditioned myself for whatever the outcome is... I have no remorse. I did what I had to do," she added, speaking through the window of a locked room adjoining the court.

The original ruling drew fire from Philippine officials who said it was contradictory and that Ms. Balabagan should have been freed because according to Islamic Law a woman has the right to defend herself against a rapist to the point of killing him.

"All I want to do is be freed," said Ms. Balabagan, her head covered by an Islamic-style black veil.

The previous verdict was cancelled by Sheikh Zaid who wants "to be doubly sure that she gets a fair trial... It doesn't mean the previous judges were wrong or that there were errors, necessarily, but hope (for her freedom)," an official earlier told Reuters.

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New Arab diplomats shy away from Israeli embrace

TEL AVIV (AP) — When Israel and the PLO signed a peace agreement two years ago, Israelis had high hopes that normal relations with Arab states were just around the corner after decades of isolation.

But it hasn't worked out that way. Despite an initial flurry of contacts with moderate Arab regimes, the anticipated cultural and trade relations have been slow in coming.

The main reason appears to be Syria. Israeli officials say President Hafez Assad persuaded other Arab leaders not to upgrade relations with Israel until there was progress in Israel-Syria talks.

Arab reserve is evident in the low profile maintained by representatives of Jordan and Morocco, the two Arab countries that have established diplomatic ties with the Jewish state recently.

"I don't want to be a celebrity," said Jordan's Ambassador Marwan Muasher, speaking in the beachfront Tel Aviv hotel suite that has served as a temporary embassy since last December.

Dr. Muasher acknowledged that he does already

have some Israeli friends. But while he predicted the Jewish state would one day be accepted in the region, he felt the psychological barriers brought on by decades of war would first have to be overcome.

"There is an overcautiousness on the part of the Israeli public to normalise relations with Jordan," he said. "This is not matched by a similar one in the Jordanian public."

Diplomats at the Moroccan interest office, located in an apartment building on Tel Aviv's fashionable Hamedina Square, were reluctant to discuss relations despite brisk Israeli tourism to their North African country.

Consul Saeed Aminzou volunteered only that 100 visas are issued each day. "So you see, we are really too busy for interviews," he smiled. When pressed, Mr. Aminzou, in his 30s, termed Israel "a nice mix of cultures."

"I have been to good restaurants with my colleagues," he added, apologising that he could not offer a business card and rising to indicate the brief meeting was over.

The Arab diplomat with the highest profile remains

Mohammad Bassiouni, Egypt's ambassador for the past decade.

Through good-natured TV appearances and well-attended parties, Mr. Bassiouni has helped chip away at many Israelis' lingering distrust of Arabs. But despite 16 years of peace, Israeli-Egyptian relations remain a one-way street, with few Egyptians travelling to Israel either for tourism or business.

Israel's continuing isolation suggests that the idea of a "new Middle East" promoted by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres was premature.

In the wake of the September 1993 Israel-PLO accord, Israeli leaders were feted by King Hassan II in Morocco. They were also openly welcomed in Tunis, where Israeli jets had bombed PLO Headquarters in 1985.

Within months leaders and business delegations were touring Kuwait, Oman and Gulf emirates. Officials in Israel disclosed plans for a natural gas pipeline from the Gulf to Israel. The first regional conference attended by Israel was held in Morocco.

The momentum fizzled,

largely because Syria made it clear to other Arab states that normalisation was a bargaining chip that should be withheld until Israel returns land — especially the Golan Heights, to Syria.

Dr. Muasher said what is holding Arabs back is the unfinished business in the peace process: Israeli peace with Syria and Lebanon, and a final settlement that resolves Arab claims to Jerusalem.

Arab states have reason to pay attention to Syria's wishes. Damascus hosts a dozen radical anti-peace groups and has in the past used violence and threats to veto policies that it opposes.

Most Arab states have ended the boycott of companies doing business with Israel, but direct trade with Israel is limited. Jordan has a small economy, and only recently opened its borders. Trade only amounts to about \$80 million a year with Egypt and \$100 million with Morocco, most through third parties.

"We have passed the point of no return but to see real fruits will take time," said Dan Katarivas of the Israeli Trade Ministry.

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 773111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
14:00	The Flintstones
14:30	The Mighty Jungle
15:00	Pugwall Summer
15:30	Movie Magic
16:00	Families
17:00	
Children's Programme — Spirou	
17:30	Li Marche Du Siccil
18:00	News in French
18:15	Ushala
19:30	News Headlines
19:35	Tomorrow's World
20:00	Nurses
20:30	The Bold and the Beautiful
21:15	Starthair
22:00	News in English
22:25	CosmicStrike
23:30	The Hidden Room
23:59	Grace Under Fire

PRAYER TIMES	
04:22	Fajr
05:49	(Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:41	Dhuhr
16:22	Asr
19:34	Maghrib
21:01	Isha

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR	
reading: Amman 40 per cent, Aqaba 34 per cent.	
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Khalil Abu Marjoub	779797
Dr. Mounir Al Qasbi	779599
Dr. Mohammad Al Shabaki	772222
Dr. Mohammed Lubbadah	683585
Ferdous pharmacy	661912
Al Asena pharmacy	778336
Nairokh pharmacy	637055
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shimada pharmacy	637660
Nairokh pharmacy	637672
Najib pharmacy	847632
IRBID:	
Dr. Ali Al Shogairi	246141
Alquds pharmacy	(—)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Tarq Hijawi	965441
Khalifah pharmacy	985417
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	630341
Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Fire Brigade	637101
Blood Bank	771311
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630341
Hotel Complaints	630341
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	
Complaints	874767
Amman Municipality	771111
Telephone Information	101231
Telephone (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	101231
Central Amman Telephone	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	661101
Radio Television	771111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	661100
Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power Company	636381
RJ Flight Information	16-533201
Queen Alia Intl. Airport	08-53201
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn.	634441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	632262
Malhas, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shmouani	664171/4
Shimouani Hospital	669131
University Hospital	848945
Al-Musash Hospital	667277/9
The Islamic, Abdali	666127/7
Al-Ahli, Abdali	664164/6
Irbid, Al-Musash	777101/2
Al-Bashir, J. Asrafieh	771112/5
Army, Marika	891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital	002240/50
Amal Hospital	667155
ZARQA:	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital	
Irbid	
Irbid Sinia Hospital	(09)986232
Al Hikma Modern Hospital	(09)990901
The Arab Centre for Health and Special Surgery	865199
Princess Basma Hospital	(02)725553
Gresh Catholic Hospital	(02)722778
Irbid Al-Nasra Hospital	(02)247100
AQABA:	
Princess Haya Hospital	(03)341111
HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Husseini Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn	644281/6

ROYAL JORDANIAN (RJ) INFORMATION	
Department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53202-5, where it should always be verified.	
ARRIVALS	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
05:30	Bangkok (RJ)
06:30	Jeddah (RJ)
07:30	Larnaca (RJ)
08:15	Dubai, Riyadh (RJ)
10:10	Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:30	Aqaba (RJ)
10:30	Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
12:15	Ankara, Istanbul (RJ)
12:15	Amsterdam, Brussels (RJ)
13:20	Chicago, Amsterdam (add) (RJ)
17:45	New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:00	Paris (RJ)
18:55	London (RJ)
19:00	Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
19:15	Athens (RJ)
19:25	Ankara, Istanbul (RJ)
21:30	Rome (add) (RJ)
22:30	Frankfurt (RJ)
22:35	Vienne, Munich (RJ)
21:15	Cairo (RJ)
02:15	Aqaba (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)	
07:30	Rome (AZ)
08:45	Beirut (ME)
13:30	Sanaa (Y)
14:00	Sanaa (Y)
14:00	Doha (GF)
14:00	Moscow (SU)
21:25	Cairo (MS)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN	
Dep. Amman	8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus	5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus	7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman	5:00 p.m. every Sunday
MARKET PRICES	
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.	
Apple	700/500
Banana	680
Banana (Mokannar)	620
Cabbage	100/50
Carrot	220/120
Cauliflower	260/160
Cucumbers (large)	150/100
Cucumbers (small)	200/180
Eggplant	180/100
Garlic	650/500
Grapes	350/250
Lemon	630/500
Marrow (large)	140/90
Marrow (small)	130/80
Mulukhia	130/80
Okra	750/600
Onion (dry)	200/100
Orange	420/220
Peas	800/600
Pepper (hot)	130/80
Pepper (sweet)	160/100
Potato	360/260
Spring Beans	420/300
Sweet Melon	300/200
Tomato	140/80
Water Melon	120/80

AMMAN (R) — Jordanian (RJ) staff to get free personal to Jordanian RJ planes for five RJ personnel. Employees can earn five-year working RJ. He said they were employed 30 months worked for RJ for more than 10 years.

19,750 tourists visi

Hom

Jordan. Isra

AMMAN (R) — Israel and Jordan are expected to sign a trade agreement in the coming few weeks to prepare for a free exchange of goods after Jordan's peace with Israel, according to a statement by the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

Abol Raghieb

In a statement issued by the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the minister said that the agreement is expected to be signed in the coming weeks. The agreement will provide for an exchange of goods between the two countries.

Israel has agreed to give Jordanian products preferential treatment in order to boost trade between the two countries. This agreement is expected to be signed under discussion with the Israeli side, the minister said.

Parties con

claim U.S. i

AMMAN (R) — The Jordanian government has demanded that the United States release a statement which was made by the Jordanian Prime Minister, Abdallah II, that the U.S. was part of a conspiracy to overthrow the Jordanian government and to establish a pro-Israeli regime in Jordan.

The statement was made during a visit to the U.S. by the Prime Minister. He said that the U.S. was trying to overthrow the Jordanian government and to establish a pro-Israeli regime in Jordan. He said that the U.S. was trying to overthrow the Jordanian government and to establish a pro-Israeli regime in Jordan.

Jordan, Israel soon to sign trade agreement

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan and Israel are expected to sign a trade agreement in the coming few weeks to prepare for a free exchange of goods after Jordan passed a law ending the boycott of Israel, according to Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb.

In a statement quoted Saturday by Al-Dustour daily, the minister said that Jordanian and Israeli teams are currently involved in finalising the terms of the agreement which is expected to provide for an exemption of customs duty on some products.

Israel has tentatively agreed to give Jordanian products preferential treatment in trade but details on this agreement are still under discussion by the two sides, the minister said.

With the end of the boycott on Israel, Jordanian products will have new markets, an added benefit to the national economy, he said.

Responding to a question about the prospect of setting up a free trade zone between the two sides, Mr. Abul Ragheb said that this subject was not under consideration at present and that discussions on this matter would be lengthy and could take place after the flow of goods has been monitored between the two sides and after rigorous examination on the feasibility of such a project.

As for Jordanian-Palestinian trade, the minister said that agreements on trade exchanges between the two sides was in force but that the two sides may, on occasions, introduce amendments to their agreements



Ali Abul Ragheb

due to developments in trade exchanges and in consideration of the needs of both parties.

Parties condemn Abu Marzouk arrest, claim U.S. hostility still apparent

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan's opposition parties Saturday voiced their condemnation of the arrest in the United States of Moussa Abu Marzouk, head of the political wing of the militant Islamic group, Hamas, and demanded his immediate release.

A statement, a copy of which was made available to the Jordan Times, charged that Abu Marzouk's arrest was part of a plot planned and carried out by American security authorities with Israeli occupation authorities under the pretext of fighting terrorism.

The statement said that the arrest reaffirms Washington's continued favourable bias towards the Zionist entity, America's hostile attitude towards Arab and Islamic nations and their support of Zionist aggression on Palestinian people and their occupation of Arab Palestine.

This hostile action against Palestinians, "asserts" once again the American administration's total disregard for the freedom of other nations and Washington's determination to deprive them of their legitimate rights, the statement said.

The statement also said that the American administration is making a mockery of international law for the purpose of currying favour with Zionist organisations which continue to control American policies in matters connected to the Arab-Zionist conflict and the issues of the Arab nation.

The arrest of Abu Marzouk is bound to inflame the feelings of Arabs and Muslims and would incite angry reactions against the United States, the statement warned.

Abu Marzouk was detained 10 days ago by immigration officials in New York. Israel issued a warrant for his arrest and said it would seek his extradition.

The statement said that the undersigned appeal to all humanitarian organisations which defend human rights, all political parties, associations and various organisations around the world, to ensure the immediate release of Abu Marzouk and help stop his extradition to Israel.

The leader's arrest and extradition to the occupation authorities, the statement continued, would result in

further instability that would not be confined to the Palestinian arena but would extend to the Arab and international spheres.

It said that a just, durable and comprehensive peace in the region can never be established by depriving its peoples of their rights, and that neither can it survive by arresting freedom fighters in a legitimate struggle for freedom and accusing them of acts of terrorism.

The statement called for the establishment of peace by putting an end to the occupation of Arab lands and the restoration of all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

The statement was signed by the following parties:

The Islamic Action Front, the National Action Front, the Jordanian Democratic People's Party, the Democratic Arab Party, the Progressive Arab Ba'ath Party, the Constitutional Arab Jordanian Front, the Jordanian Socialist Arab Ba'ath Party, the Jordanian Socialist Democratic Party, the Jordanian Communist Party, the Jordanian Democratic People's Unionist Party and the Jordanian Democratic Progressive Party.

Premier chairs meeting of economic council, stresses responsibility in promoting investments

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Saturday presided over a meeting by the Economic Consultative Council (ECC) to review preparations for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) conference due to be held here in October.

A statement following the meeting, which was held at the Prime Ministry, said that the council discussed a Jordanian working paper to be reviewed by the conference's participants.

The statement said that the Prime Minister stressed the common responsibility of the public and private sector in promoting the country's readiness for foreign and Arab investments.

Speaking at the meeting was Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb, who briefed the council on official preparations for the conference.

Mr. Abul Ragheb said that the decision to hold the conference in Amman was taken at the Casablanca conference which set up a committee grouping Asian and European countries as well as the United States and Canada to help organise the conference.

He said that at least 1,000 participants are expected to take part in the conference and that consultations are under way among the various participating countries over the principles which will be contained in the Amman Declaration.

The Amman Declaration is expected to underline the importance of regional projects, the creation of the



Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Saturday presides over a meeting of the Economic Consultative Council at which preparations for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) conference were reviewed (Petra photo)

Middle East Development Bank and the formation of a regional tourist council as well as a regional businessmen's council.

A Jordanian steering committee has decided to present four main topics to the Amman conference.

These topics centre on economy and infrastructure, commerce and industry, financing and investments and the economic environment, Mr. Abul Ragheb said.

There are four categories of Jordanian schemes to be

submitted to the conference, the minister said. The first includes 27 projects estimated at a cost of \$3.4 billion mostly covering infrastructure schemes to be implemented by the private and public sectors.

These projects were prepared by the Ministry of Planning in cooperation with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and cover energy, industry, mining, transport, communications, tourism, water and environment sectors.

The second category includes 65 Jordanian projects covering small and medium-size industries prepared by the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

The third focuses on international financing for the development of the Jordan Rift Valley. And the fourth category includes projects which are usually undertaken by the private sector.

Mr. Abul Ragheb said that Jordan will submit regional projects in coordination with

Egypt, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and Israel.

According to the minister, Jordan has sent invitations to prominent and key people from the private sectors of several countries.

The Economic Consultative Council is made up of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, several cabinet members and representatives of the private sector in Jordan.

Ministry shifts to promoting vocational specialisations to serve local job market requirements—Rateb Saoud

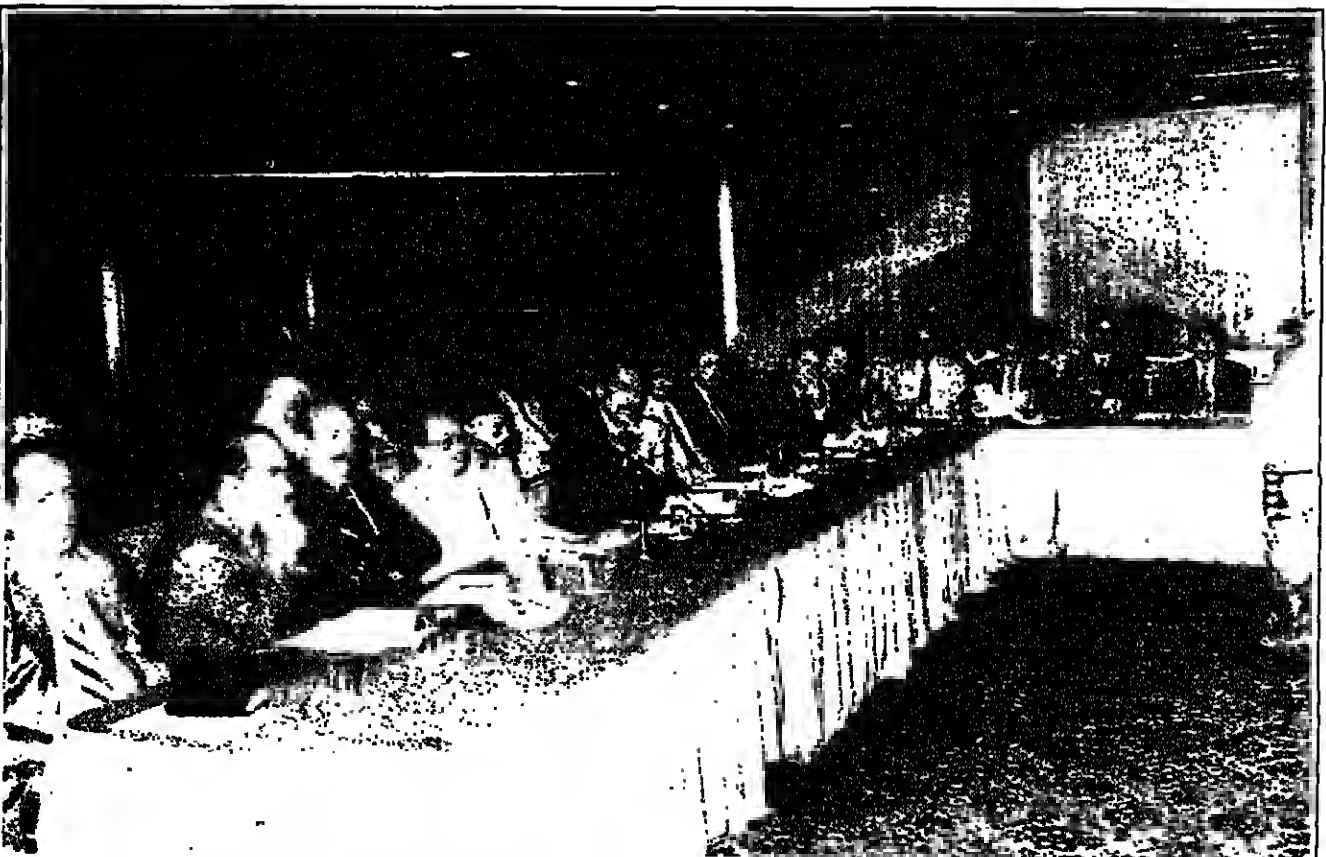
AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Higher Education is currently reducing the number of students accepted to academic curricula at the country's colleges and is instead expanding its enrollment of students in vocational specialisations and introducing new majors that would meet local labour market requirements, according to Minister of Higher Education Rateb Saoud.

This policy was adopted because graduates of academic faculties are finding it difficult to get jobs, while vocational training graduates are being employed at a better rate, said the minister in an opening address to a six-day symposium on higher and advanced management of education in the Arab World.

The Ministry of Higher Education has also begun diversifying vocational training at the community colleges and introducing a one-year training course in fields which are in high demand in the local market, Mr. Saoud said.

While noting that major changes in technology and science education have been achieved in Arab educational institutions over the past few years, he said it must be admitted that the Arab World still faces an educational crisis of different forms.

Mr. Saoud said the devel-



Participants from around the Arab World Saturday attend the opening of a six-day symposium on higher and advanced management of education in the region. The symposium was opened by Minister of Higher Education Rateb Saoud (Petra photo)

opments in the fields of science and technology have presented new challenges to educational institutions but it is regrettable to say that a crisis exists in the form of inability of these institutions to adapt their educational and vocational training programmes to the actual needs

of the local labour markets, he added.

Referring to the symposium, Dr. Saoud said that it has been organised to enable educationalists and specialists to diagnose the problems and suggest solutions, adding that without human resources development the

Arab World can not dream of attaining socio-economic development.

He said that despite the great number of universities in the Arab World the region's countries have not yet risen to the occasion and failed so far to meet the

requirements of the community.

Delegates representing Jordan, Palestine, Yemen, the United Arab Emirates, Syria, Iraq, Libya and Algeria are participating in the symposium, which is being held at the Jerusalem Hotel in Amman.



Ministry of Education Secretary General Izzat Jaradat (centre) Saturday presides over a workshop organised by the ministry at the Teachers Club to discuss means of assessing students' performance (Petra photo)

NEWS IN BRIEF

RJ staff to get free cargo benefit

AMMAN (Petra) — Chief Executive Officer of Royal Jordanian (RJ) Nader Dahab has issued a decision allowing RJ personnel to transport various quantities of cargo aboard RJ planes for free. Executive Director of RJ's Air Cargo Mohammad Hashem Muradi said the decision includes all RJ personnel, depending on their period of service. He said employees can use this privilege only once during the coming five-year period. Mr. Muradi said those who spent 5-10 years working for RJ are entitled to transport 100 kilograms of cargo free of charge over the coming five years. He said those who served RJ for 10-15 years are entitled to transport 200 kilograms of cargo during the same period. Those who served the air carrier for 15-20 years, he said, can transport up to 300 kilograms of goods. And those who worked for RJ for more than 20 years are entitled to transport up to 500 kilograms of goods.

19,750 tourists visit Petra in July

AMMAN (Petra) — A total of 19,750 tourists visited Petra in July, including 14,850 foreigners and 4,900 Jordanians. Only half that number visited the ancient Nabataean city during July of 1994. Officials said the fees collected from the

visitors totalled JD 305,000 during the month.

College dean heads for Cairo conference

AMMAN (Petra) — Dean of the Princess Rahma Social Services College Faisal Gharaibeh on Saturday left Amman for Cairo to participate in a conference on the Islamic role in social services which opened there Saturday evening. Dr. Gharaibeh said the conference, organised jointly by the International Islamic Thought Institute and the International Social Services Institute, will discuss social services from an Islamic perspective and means of developing curricula at social services institutes.

CDD responds to 780 emergencies last week

AMMAN (Petra) — The Civil Defence Department (CDD) dealt with 780 different emergencies last week, most of which involved first aid cases. During the same week, the CDD reported 117 fires, most of them in forest areas. The department also reported 21 rescue cases and 16 deaths, saying seven resulted from sickness and nine from accidents which included road accidents, electric shocks, drowning and festive shooting at weddings. The department issued a warning urging citizens not to use firearms in weddings.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

• "Honey, I shrunk the kids," at the American Center at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

• Paintings by Aneta Traikova at Alia Art Gallery

• "Exhibition of Chinese Products '95," at Al Bassam Hall, King Abdullah Gardens.

• Handicrafts and souvenirs at the Amman Citadel (9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.)

• Exhibition demonstrating the development of cinema over the past century at the French Cultural Centre.

Orphans' Fund reaches

JD 33.2m in capital

AMMAN (Petra) — The Orphans' Fund, an organisation established 21 years ago to protect the finances of young orphans in the country, said Saturday that its total capital by the end of 1994 stood at JD 33,215,751, which brought in a total revenue of JD 2,457,015, according to the fund's director, Mohammad Kreishan. Most of the funds are invested in development and economic projects and are directed towards increasing the financial capital of orphans, Mr. Kreishan said. Funds are also used to buy shares in several major shareholding companies and in the purchase of land. In his report on the fund's

operations in the past two years, Mr. Kreishan said that funds have also been invested in housing projects, agricultural, commercial and industrial schemes.

Lately, money from the fund has gone towards investment in small size projects that help generate employment, according to Mr. Kreishan.

This type of project entails buying equipment for handicrafts and farmers to help beneficiaries kick-start their business. Mr. Kreishan said that funds are being invested and revenues collected in line with Islamic law, rather than through commercial banks for interest on deposits.

Australia to lobby Europe against French nuclear tests

SYDNEY (R) — The Australian government upped the ante in its row with France over nuclear testing Saturday, announcing a parliamentary delegation would go to Europe to seek support against France's nuclear policy.

In an open letter to the nation published in several major Australian newspapers, Prime Minister Paul Keating said the French government jeopardised hopes that the world would emerge from the cold war without a nuclear shadow hanging over it.

He said Pacific Islands Minister Gordon Bilney would lead a delegation to Europe in September to ensure Canberra's opposition to France's tests was fully understood.

The delegation aimed to turn European opposition to the French tests into political opposition, Mr. Bilney said. "It's a matter of building up and reinforcing the coalition of opposition to this decision by France, by talking to the main players in Europe," Mr. Bilney said in a radio interview.

Another delegation, led by the president of the Australian Senate, was to meet members of the European Parliament to discuss France's plans for eight underground nuclear tests in French Polynesia from September to May, Mr. Keating said.

"A central aim of our policy is to work with this international coalition, not only in

our opposition to French tests, but also on wider nuclear issues," Mr. Keating said.

He said Australia was negotiating with Japan to seek a United Nations resolution calling for a complete and immediate end to nuclear testing and that Australia would also make an oral submission to the International Court of Justice to register formal opposition to French tests.

Canberra and Paris have traded diplomatic swipes and warning of trade reprisals after the French government's June decision to resume the tests triggered a campaign of Australian anti-French protests, public outcry and official condemnation.

Australian protests against French nuclear tests flared Saturday to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing of the Japanese city of Hiroshima.

In Brisbane, peace and environmental activists built a large white plastic mushroom cloud to symbolise the threat of nuclear destruction, while rallies were held in cities as far-flung as Alice Springs in the centre of the country to Darwin in the north.

Reflecting an anti-French mood in the country, which has seen business and diplomatic ties between the two nations tumble since June, several newspapers ran highly critical cartoons Saturday against French President Jacques Chirac.

The Australian newspaper's cartoonist depicted Mr. Chirac leading a parade of French military officers celebrating the nuclear tests while passing the sombre and grim faces of people at a shrine remembering the anniversary of Hiroshima.

Mr. Keating said Sunday's anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima was an appropriate moment to urge governments globally to strengthen efforts to bring about an end to nuclear testing.

"Hiroshima is a most powerful reminder that we must not waste that opportunity," he said.

The U.S. nuclear bombing of the Japanese city of Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, killed 140,000 people on impact. A second bomb on Nagasaki three days later killed 70,000 on impact.

Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans denied Saturday that his country wanted to drive France out of the Pacific and said Paris had made the charge to divert attention from its nuclear tests in French Polynesia.

In an interview with the French Le Figaro, Mr. Evans accused the French government of bluffing by announcing economic measures against Australia that were less than met the eye.

French government spokesman Francois Baroin had questioned the sincerity of Australia's indignation over President Jacques Chirac's decision to conduct a final seven or eight under-

ground tests in the South Pacific, saying that some countries wanted to force France out of the region.

"I categorically reject that interpretation," Mr. Evans said. "France plays a very positive role in the Pacific, notably in development aid. Neighbourly relations between Australia and the French Pacific territories are excellent."

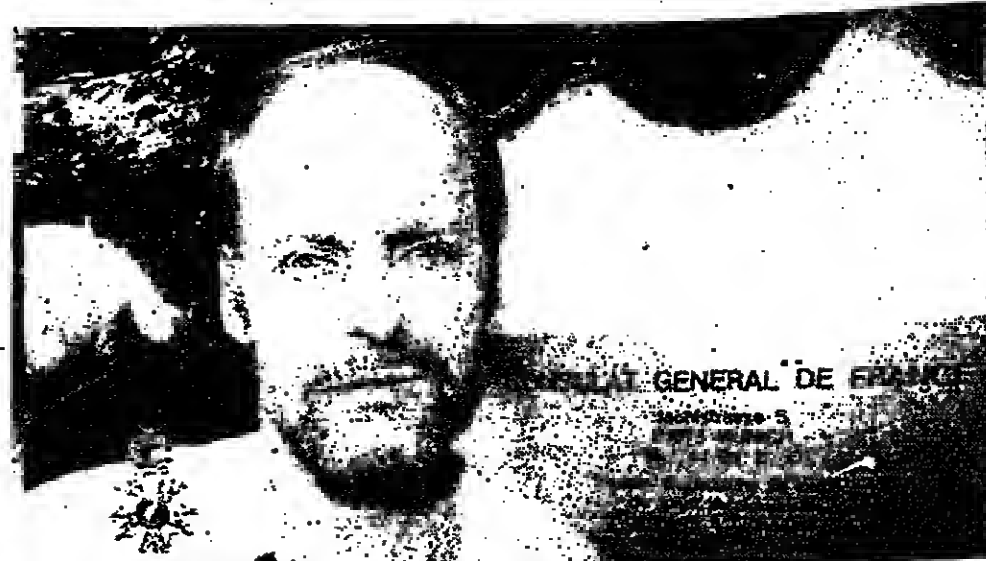
He said Australia realised that independence movements were in a minority in New Caledonia and French Polynesia and had no grounds to lecture France on the issue of independence.

"Mr. Baroin is using a scarecrow to distract attention from what should be the real debate. If public opinion, in Australia or elsewhere, is so hostile, it's for a very simple reason: President Chirac's decision is a bad decision," he said.

The minister said France's announcement that it would re-examine coal and uranium purchases from Australia was largely bluff.

"Paris approach on purchases of Australian uranium is perfectly cynical," he said, noting that France would pocket a saving of about \$20 million if it bought uranium on the world market rather than respect a long-term contract with Canberra.

Since Australia was the world's biggest coal exporter, cancellation of French contracts would have only a marginal effect, he said.



Dietrich Hahn, grandson of Nobel Prize winner and discoverer of the nuclear fission Otto Hahn, holds the Order of the French Legion of Honour which was presented to his grandfather in 1959, in front of French consulate in Munich. Dietrich Hahn, 49, publicist and the

only grandson of the chemist who died in 1968, gave back the order and certificate to the French consul here to forward it to French President Jacques Chirac in protest against France's decision to resume nuclear tests in South Pacific (AFP photo)

British-born actress Ida Lupino dies

LOS ANGELES (R) — British-born actress Ida Lupino, who started in more than 60 films before carving out a pioneering role as a director, died of a stroke after a battle with colon cancer. She was 77.

Her spokeswoman said Lupino died Thursday night at her home in the Los Angeles suburb of Burbank with her sister and daughter at her side as well as several friends.

The actress had been ill for some time and had been released from hospital several days earlier, spokeswoman Mary Ann Anderson told Reuters.

The three-married Lupino is survived by her daughter Bridget Duff and sister Rita Lupino. She was most recently married to Howard Duff who died in 1990, seven years after they divorced.

True to life, she found fame playing headstrong and ambitious characters in a string of Warner Bros. Melodramas such as 1941's *High Sierra* opposite Humphrey Bogart and 1943's *The Hard Way*, for which she was named best actress by the New York Film Critics.

However, she was never nominated for an Academy Award. Overall she considered her Hollywood acting

career a failure, once referring to herself as a "poor man's Bette Davis."

By 1948, when she became an American citizen, she had largely given up acting to focus on producing and directing.

She will probably be best remembered as one of Hollywood's pioneering women directors, tackling subjects such as rape, pedophilia, and illegitimacy. She often wrote the screenplays and served as producer as well, a rare feat for women in 1950s Hollywood.

Lupino was born in the London suburb of Brixton in February 1918, into an acting family that originally hailed from Italy and emigrated to England in the 17th century. Her father was comedian Stanley Lupino and her mother actress Connie Emerald. Her first role was a Lolita-type character aged 15 in Allan Dwan's *Her First Affair*.

She arrived in Hollywood in 1933 playing minor ingenue roles on the Paramount lot until she got out of her contract after a brief bout of polio.

She came to the critics' attention in that studio's *The Light That Failed* opposite Ronald Colman in 1939. Warner Bros. Signed her to a

contract for a half-dozen years during which she turned in several memorable performances. A pianist, she was able to show off her under-used musical talents in such films as *Thank Your Lucky Stars* and *The Man I Love*.

With second husband Collier Young (she had previously been married to actor Louis Hayward), she set up a production company, Emerald Pictures, in 1949. She wrote scripts and soon began directing, making her official directing debut in 1950's *RKO-released The Young Lovers*, a movie about a young dancer afflicted by polio.

In the late 1950s she starred for three seasons in the sitcom *Mr. Adams and Eve*, as a Hollywood star who frequently scraps with her actor husband, played by Howard Duff. The two separated in real life in 1972.

She remained a prolific director and sometimes producer on television with more than 100 episode assignments ranging from *The Untouchables* to *Gilligan's Island*.

Lupino recently spent six months in a nursing home for physical therapy, but, according to Hollywood trade paper *daily Variety*, she was in talks to return to acting last May.

Andreotti takes to stage as trial looms

FERENTINO, Italy (R) — Former Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, who goes on trial on mafia charges next month, warmed up for the fight of his life by taking the stage as a lawyer defending an authoritarian medieval Pope.

The seven-times prime minister and current life senator was the main attraction at a Friday night theatre production that recounted the stormy pontificate of Pope Boniface VIII, who reigned from 1294 to 1303.

Pope Boniface is one of the most controversial popes in history because he is said to have agitated behind the scenes to force the abdication of his predecessor Celestine V, and to have bribed cardinals to elect him.

In the Divine Comedy, the poet Dante branded Pope Boniface "the fox" and consigned him to hell. Mr. Andreotti, a political wheeler-dealer for almost half a century, was also been

called "the fox" by detractors.

Pope Boniface's pontificate was marked by a struggle with emerging European monarchies, particularly France, over the extent of papal authority on the continent.

After actors read from the Divine Comedy and sang medieval madrigals, Mr. Andreotti, sitting on a red damask-backed throne with a papal robe and rod at his feet, delivered a spirited hour-long defence of Pope Boniface.

Another senator defended Sciarra Colonna, an Italian nobleman aligned with France who tried to arrest the Pope.

Mr. Andreotti won his case when a jury made up of an historian, a journalist and a Roman Catholic monsignor ruled that while Pope Boniface was not a saint, Sciarra Colonna was worse because he used treachery and violence to try to depose a Pope.

"Let's not mix the sacred with the profane," Mr. Andreotti, an expert on church and medieval history, told a reporter who asked whether the "victory" had helped him develop a defence strategy for his upcoming mafia trial.

He brushed off a reporter who asked if he was preparing psychologically for when he goes on trial in Sicily on charges of having been the mafia's chief protector for decades.

Mr. Andreotti has denied all the charges, which are built on testimony of mafia turncoats. He says they are part of a mob plot to punish him for crackdowns on organised crime by the Christian Democrat-led coalition governments he headed.

His judicial troubles did not surface officially at the outdoor theatrical event, part of a summer festival in the rural Ciociaria area south of Rome. But next month's trial in the Sicilian capital Palermo seemed to hang in the air.

Simpson prosecutor reveals new DNA tests; judge questions admissibility

LOS ANGELES (AP) — An O.J. Simpson prosecutor unveiled new DNA results Friday tentatively linking Simpson's blood and that of murder victim Ronald Goldman to Simpson's Bronco. But jurors may never hear about it.

The judge said the tests, which bolster other evidence now under defence attack, were started too late and might not be admissible in Simpson's trial.

"I still have the concern about the delay in the starting of the testing and whether or not any of that RFLP results will be admissible before this jury," said Superior Court Judge Lance Ito. "That's an issue that has yet to be resolved."

The judge's remarks indicated he permitted the prosecution to go ahead with RFLP tests on mixed blood samples from the Bronco earlier this year, but the California Department of Justice Lab delayed starting testing "for a significant period of time, approaching two months."

Some RFLP tests can take up to three months or more to complete, and the prosecution's results have dribbled in throughout the case. Many were presented to jurors last spring, while others, such as those on the Bronco blood, are ongoing.

Defence attorney Barry Scheck said the defence has had no access to the new tests and argued they should not be

admitted. Prosecutor Rockne Harmon countered that RFLP testing, considered more reliable than the PCR process, takes longer and results are only now appearing, gradually in chemical strips.

"We have now produced a three-probe RFLP match consistent with the blood of Mr. Simpson and the blood of Ronald Goldman," Mr. Harmon told the judge. "We will continue to probe it."

"That's what they fear," he said of the defence. Simpson, a former football star who stayed in the celebrity spotlight as an actor and TV sports commentator, has pleaded innocent to the June 12, 1994, murders of his ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and Goldman, one of her friends.

Mr. Harmon and fellow prosecutor George Clarke wanted to use the results in a hypothetical question to defence witness John Gerdes, who has dismissed PCR tests performed on the same Bronco blood as untrustworthy due to contamination and sloppy evidence handling.

Judge Ito refused to allow the question and suggested that the new tests could be attacked on similar grounds as PCR: that the blood had been exposed to the environment for so long that it was degraded and possibly contaminated by the time it reached the laboratory.

Meanwhile, Mr. Clarke

put Dr. Gerdes through a rigorous cross-examination but drew only a few concessions from the calm, methodical microbiologist.

Dr. Gerdes acknowledged that some blood samples could not have been contaminated by sloppy Los Angeles police technicians because the DNA material was extracted by two outside laboratories, "Cellmark" Diagnostics and the State Justice Department.

Dr. Gerdes repeatedly tried to interject that police could have contaminated the samples before the DNA was extracted, such as when criminalists soaked up blood on swatches at the crime scene.

Mr. Clarke pointed out that the samples from Simpson's Bronco were collected not by rank and file technicians but by the LAPD's lab director.

"That may be," said Dr. Gerdes, but he added, "in my opinion none of the individuals are collecting the materials in a manner that a microbiologist would consider safe. They're all too risky."

Mr. Clarke objected to many of Dr. Gerdes' answers as non-responsive, and the judge ordered the jury to disregard several of them. Judge Ito expressed impatience at Dr. Gerdes' tone, snapping at one point, "doctor, answer the question."

Japan still divided over cabinet reshuffle

TOKYO (AFP) — Key Japanese ministers were undecided Saturday whether to agree to stay on in their posts as requested by Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama in his planned cabinet reshuffle, it was reported Saturday.

Yoshiro Kono, who has been asked to remain as foreign minister, told the Japan Broadcasting Corp. "I'd like to think about various things, not only about myself, before making a final decision."

Mr. Murayama has pledged to carry out the reshuffle in a bid to shore-up his shaky coalition following its poor showing in July 23 upper house elections.

The cabinet met late into the night Friday to discuss the reshuffle. Mr. Kono, head of the powerful Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), had originally agreed to Mr. Murayama's request to stay on but then changed his mind and asked for time to reflect.

It is widely believed that Mr. Kono wants to step down as foreign minister in order to concentrate on securing his re-election as party leader in the LDP's presidential race in September.

Trinidad capital under state of emergency amid political fracas

PORT-OF-SPAIN (AFP) — The capital of the tiny Caribbean Republic of Trinidad and Tobago was under a state of emergency and the speaker under house arrest amid a widening political fracas pitting the government against the legislature.

Legislators were still debating late Friday a measure, which was expected to pass by a simple majority, to remove the speaker of the House of Representatives from his post.

Prime Minister Patrick Manning declared the three-month state of emergency Thursday on the capital city of some 300,000 residents and placed Speaker Ooah Seapaul under house arrest.

Mr. Manning feared Ms. Seapaul, a woman who was chosen for the legislative post four years ago, was trying to whittle away the government's majority in parliament by suspending ministers.

Ms. Seapaul's brother, Public Utilities Minister Ralph Maraj, resigned from the cabinet earlier in the day to protest his sister's treatment, although he retained

his parliament seat. Residents went about their business as usual and no restrictions were imposed on the press despite the unfolding political drama and pounding rain. No arrests, demonstrations, or protests were reported.

The state of emergency sharply curtails individual liberties, bans public meetings, and empowers police to detain suspects indefinitely without charge.

In a statement to parliament before debate began, Attorney-General Keith Sobion accused Ms. Seapaul of "arbitrary and capricious" actions and said the state of emergency aimed "to prevent the systematic overthrow of the duly elected government."

"The government is concerned now that we as a country shall return to a normal state in the shortest possible time," he said, pledging to uphold democracy.

"It is no part of our tradition that any person or group of persons... should seek to control or overturn our par-

liament and our other democratic institutions," Mr. Sobion said.

"Any such action must be firmly resisted by right-thinking citizens," he said.

Police also tried unsuccessfully to arrest Yasin Abu Bakr, head of the black Muslim separatist group Jamaat Al Muslimeen, for making threats against the government.

Mr. Abu Bakr led a failed coup here in July 1990 in which 27 people died.

The struggle between the prime minister and the House speaker began in June, when Ms. Seapaul claimed a mechanic had swindled some \$17,000 from her.

Ms. Seapaul took the matter to court, where the government claimed she committed perjury. The case was dismissed because her evidence was uncorroborated by independent evidence.

The government asked Ms. Seapaul, the first female speaker in Trinidad and Tobago, to resign on grounds her credibility had been irreparably damaged.

Clinton announces restrictions on lobbyists

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton sought to turn up the pressure Friday for political reform, announcing plans to require lobbyists on the federal government to register and disclose who they represent.

The initiative was clearly calculated to draw a contrast with the Republicans in Congress, whom Mr. Clinton accused of dragging their feet on campaign finance and lobbying reform while handing over the legislative process to lobbyists.

"Delay, debate and division, that's the same old thing," Mr. Clinton said of Republicans in the House of Representatives. "They won't put lobbyists in their proper place in our governmental structure."

At Mr. Clinton's side as he spoke in the White House Oval Office were historian Doris Kearns Goodwin and John Gardner, a former cabinet secretary and founder of Common Cause, the liberal good government group.

They were invited to the White House to discuss political reforms as "the kind of people I would appoint" to a bi-partisan commission on political reform agreed to in late June, Mr. Clinton said.

The idea of a commission

to remove the issue from the partisan battleground was sprung by a member of the audience at a picnic in New Hampshire, during an impromptu debate between Mr. Clinton and House Speaker Newt Gingrich.

The two men shook hands on the idea, but Mr. Clinton complained that even though he wrote a letter to Mr. Gingrich putting forth his ideas on how to do it "that moment of optimism gave way to five weeks of silence."

Asked about it at a news conference, Mr. Gingrich said his work to overhaul Medicare, the state insurance for the elderly, was all he had time for until the fall.

"Now, if you just want some PR gimmick to get up and hash somebody, you can do that in a half hour. But if you want to seriously get to real campaign reform, it takes time."

"We have not had the mental energy and the time this summer to do anything except the appropriations bills and Medicare," he said.

Mr. Clinton retorted: "It takes no energy at all... All he has to do is what he said he'd do when he shook hands with me — let's set up a commission."

Meanwhile, Mr. Clinton

said he would issue executive orders barring lobbyists from dealing with the federal government without disclosing the interests they represent.

"Right now lobbyist can operate in secret. They can lawfully conceal who they work for, what loopholes or contracts or regulations they are seeking to pass, or what actions they are seeking to stop. And lobbying of the executive branch isn't disclosed at all."

Under the new restriction... entities spending more than \$20,000 a year on lobbying activities would have to register on a semi-annual basis.

They would have to give the name of the lobbyist, say who their client is, the issues they seek to influence, and provide a good faith estimate of how much they spend on lobbying the executive and Congress.

Mr. Clinton, however, stop short of taking unilateral steps on campaign financing practices on grounds, arguing that to do so would give the Republicans an unfair advantage.

The sentiment that the average person is powerless to influence a Washington dominated by special in-

terests has pervaded recent elections, including the November mid-term elections that swept Republicans into the majority in Congress.

Mr. Gardner called the role of money in the political process "a cancer eating at the vitals of our government" and "a fatal addiction" that many members of congress cannot break.

"Americans have always believed in the consent of the governed. It now looks as though we're talking about the consent of the donors," he said.

Ms. Kearns Goodwin also said the "sourcing power of money within our political process is one of the most damaging forces in our national life."

"Money gets the individuals into the door. Money revises legislation. Money restrains the enforcement of laws. Money has a direct impact on the substance of almost every piece of legislation," she said.

"It is little wonder, the more I think about it, that our citizens are disenchanted with politics and government. This process has corrupted both parties," she said.

Forgotten forceps found in man's belly after 10 years

CAIRO (AFP) — An Egyptian cab driver complaining of intense stomach pains was discovered to have a 20 centimetre-long (8-inch) pair of forceps in his gut left by an operation 10 years earlier, a paper reported here. Mahmud Ahmad Abdul Salam was first operated in 1985 for kidney stones in a private clinic in Cairo, the government daily Al-Ahram reported in its early Saturday edition. Six years later he was struck with renewed pain which he treated unsuccessfully for four years with painkillers. When he finally reported to a hospital, X-rays revealed the instrument forgotten in his stomach cavity had destroyed one of his kidneys. "Abdul Salam" is now waiting for an operation to remove the forceps, the paper said.

French actress charged with drug possession

PARIS (AP) — Sultry French actress Beatrice Dalle, convicted of shoplifting from a jewellery store three years ago, was charged with possession of heroin and cocaine, and ordered to see a doctor. Miss Dalle, 30, was charged with "complicity in use and passing on drugs." She had been arrested Tuesday evening at her apartment with four other people, two of them foreigners in France illegally. Police first arrested two suspected drug dealers on the ground floor of the building, then discovered a few grammes of the drugs in Miss Dalle's apartment along with material used to "cut" or prepare heroin. But she denied she was dealing in the drugs, and said she had the substances for her own use. Miss Dalle created a sensation with the steamy character she played in her cinematic debut nine years ago in *37.2 Le Matin*. She was convicted in January 1992 for shoplifting a necklace from a Paris jeweller after being caught in the act, and given a suspended prison sentence of six months and fined 20,000 francs (\$4,200). She said at the time she took it because she was depressed. She has just finished filming *Desire* with director Bernard Blier and co-star Jean-Paul Belmondo.

Danish national gets taken twice by prostitute

COLOMBO (AFP) — A Sri Lankan man posing as a female prostitute had sex with a Danish national and turned out to be a straight thief, police said Friday. The tourist from Denmark had picked up the "prostitute" from an intersection in the capital Thursday but discovered when they undressed that "she" was actually a man, police said. However, the man persuaded the Dane to go to bed with him. The following morning, the prostitute had vanished with his camera, watch and other valuables. Police said many thieves have taken up to prostitution and are usually disguised as women.

Woman, 43, gives birth without knowing she was pregnant

ANCONA, Italy (AFP) — A 43-year-old woman who gave birth to a baby weighing more than three kilograms (6.6 pounds) was unaware she had been pregnant, hospital sources said. The woman, who already had two children, arrived in the morning complaining of severe pain in her belly and gave birth shortly thereafter in the hospital emergency room, said a source at the Chiara-Valle Hospital here. The woman said that she had gained four or five kilos (nine to 12 pounds) in the previous nine months and had continued to menstruate. She had attributed any changes to hormonal imbalances due to menopause.

Goat claimed by 2 people leaves police confused

NEW DELHI (AP) — A woman complained to police in a southern Indian city that her neighbour, a butcher, had stolen her pet goat. But the butcher showed a receipt to prove he had bought the animal at a village fair. A police officer confused by the claims, tried to solve it by offering to pay the butcher and asking him to return the animal to the woman, the Press Trust of India news agency reported Friday.

Hiroshima

HIROSHIMA — In a ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, some 10,000 demonstrators gathered in the city to protest against nuclear war. The demonstrators, many of whom were children, held signs and sang songs. They gathered in front of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, which was built on the site of the atomic bombing. The museum is a powerful reminder of the horrors of nuclear war. The demonstrators called for a ban on nuclear weapons and for a world of peace. The ceremony was a somber affair, with many people looking sad and thoughtful. The demonstrators hoped to raise awareness of the dangers of nuclear war and to inspire others to join them in their quest for peace.

Russia cou

RUSSIA — The Russian government has announced that it will be withdrawing its troops from the Balkans. This decision comes in the wake of a series of diplomatic moves by the Russian government to ease tensions in the region. The Russian government has long been a vocal supporter of the Yugoslav government, but in recent months it has been seen as a more balanced player in the Balkan conflict. The withdrawal of troops is seen as a sign of Russian goodwill towards the West and a move towards a more peaceful resolution of the conflict. The Russian government has also announced that it will be withdrawing its troops from the Caucasus region. This decision is also seen as a sign of Russian goodwill towards the West and a move towards a more peaceful resolution of the conflict in the region.

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Some 10,000 demonstrators start a "Peace March" at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, two days before the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony commemorating the

50th anniversary of the atomic bombing on Aug. 6, 1945 (AFP photo)

Hiroshima mayor to give Japan war apology

HIROSHIMA, Japan (R) — In a surprise twist on the 50th anniversary of the world's first atomic bombing, the mayor of Hiroshima plans to break with the tradition Sunday and formally "apologise" for Japan's actions in World War II.

City officials said because of the symbolism of the 50th anniversary and heightened awareness of atomic weapons after France's decision to resume nuclear testing, Mayor Takeshi Hiraoka wanted to make a gesture that would cross national boundaries and persuade the world to abolish nuclear weapons.

They said in using the long-shunned word "apology" in reference to Japan's World War II actions, Mr. Hiraoka hoped it would give younger people a better perspective on history and persuade them against nuclear weapons.

Mr. Hiraoka's action is not without some danger because of feared backlash from ultra-nationalists who believe an apology dishonours the memory of Japan's war dead.

In 1989, a fanatical right-winger shot and wounded the mayor of Nagasaki who broke another taboo by publicly stating that wartime Emperor Hirohito bore responsibility for the war.

The Japanese government is still loathe to offer a straightforward apology. In a parliamentary resolution meant to atone for Japan's role in the war adopted last month, the wording used was "deep reflection" not "apology".

On the bomb itself, most Japanese think the United States should apologise for the atomic bombs but Americans do not agree, said a media survey released Saturday.

The TBS-CBS Poll of 3,000 adults in the two countries said 89 per cent of Japanese felt it was morally wrong to use the bomb and 69 per cent wanted an apology. In the United States, 76 per cent of respondents said there was no need for an apology.

On the eve of Sunday's anniversary events, Hiroshima overflowed with peace activists, children and tourists drawn to the place where the bomb dropped at 8:15 a.m. on Aug. 6, 1945, killing 140,000 people on impact and changing the world forever.

The tens of thousands of Japanese and foreigners arriving in the city promised to make the ceremonies the biggest in Hiroshima's history. For the first time, Hiroshi-

ma invited 20 foreign A-bomb survivors from 11 countries to the ceremonies, including a person living in North Korea.

About 13,000 guests will listen to speeches by Mr. Hiraoka, Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama and representatives of children during the hour-long ceremonies which start at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday.

The influence on this year's commemoration of the French decision to resume its nuclear testing in the South Pacific in September showed up in the many informal anti-nuclear events already in progress in the city.

In small marches, prayer recitals and other events, placards in French were evident for the first time.

About 500 activists opposing President Jacques Chirac's decision staged a sit-in at the peace memorial park, including Marie-Francoise Mendez, leader of the French Green Party.

On Friday, Japan's parliament unanimously passed a resolution calling on France and China to halt nuclear tests. The tests, the document said, threaten both the environment and treaties designed to curtail such

weapons.

Japanese authorities estimate there are still about 300,000 survivors of the atomic bombs that fell on Hiroshima and three days later on Nagasaki, where about 70,000 died on impact.

Nearly 100,000 survivors, most of them in their 60s and 70s, still live in Hiroshima, now a bustling city of 1.3 million completely rebuilt from the ashes of the atomic bomb.

A memorial service was held in Yokohama Saturday for British Commonwealth prisoners of war who died at detention camps in Japan during World War II. Kyodo News Service said.

Some 90 people, including diplomats from Britain, Australia and New Zealand, attended a Christian ritual at the Commonwealth cemetery for war dead, Kyodo said.

"Air Force Group Capt. Alan MacGregor of the British embassy attended the service, expressing deep gratitude to Japanese promoters for organising the event.

More than 1,700 British Commonwealth servicemen who died at the detention camps in Japan during the war are buried at the cemetery.

Sri Lanka rebels issue death threats to tourists

COLOMBO (Agencies) — A shadowy Tamil militant group which claimed responsibility for a car bomb blast at Colombo Airport in June has again threatened to kill tourists and foreign investors in Sri Lanka.

Ellalan Force said it "won't be ready to show any mercy" unless the armed forces stopped "killing Tamils" in the north.

The letter, which was dated July 30 and reached Reuters Saturday, denounced the current military offensive in the rebel-held Jaffna peninsula and the bombing of a church compound there.

It said it would not allow foreign investors, tourists, flights or ships into the country unless the offensive stopped.

On Friday, troops based in territory captured in Operation Leap Forward against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) launched a "limited operation," killing or wounding at least 50 rebels, the military said Saturday.

On Wednesday and Thursday, naval patrol craft attacked 16 Tiger vessels in separate incidents, destroying six of them, the military said. Ellalan Force in its letter "vehemently condemned" allegations it was connected to the LTTE, which has been at war fighting for a separate homeland in the north and east since 1983.

The group has many times warned foreigners to keep out of the country and on June 9 took responsibility for a failed car-bomb attempt at Colombo Airport.

"Due to a technical failure, the bomb didn't go off," it

said in a statement. "You are all lucky."

It threatened to set off "massive bombs" in Colombo last month unless a commission was set up to investigate the killing of Tamils in the east of the island. A few small explosions were recorded in the city, but there were no injuries.

It also claimed responsibility for a spate of small hotel bombings in Colombo last year in which there were no injuries.

The military said it took the group seriously. "They have proved they have explosives and can do something in Colombo," a spokesman said. "Our intelligence people know about them."

"We can't allow any foreign investors to come to Sri Lanka," the letter said. It told foreigners not to import Sri Lankan goods, not to build hotels in Sri Lanka or be involved in any co-production or development projects.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga Thursday announced a devolution package for the country's minority Tamils, stressing the war was against the LTTE and not the Tamil people.

The bombing of St. Peter's Church compound on the first day of Operation Leap Forward on July 9 has become steeped in controversy. It was first reported that the church was destroyed, and then it was found that the building was intact.

Both the LTTE and the International Committee of the Red Cross have blamed the air force and the government agent in Jaffna says 122 civilians were killed.

Mrs. Kumaratunga said Thursday it was probably the work of the LTTE who were firing mortar shells in that direction. The military says it does not know who was responsible for the attack but is investigating.

Ellalan Force also said it partially blamed the LTTE for the casualties at the compound for telling the people its anti-aircraft capabilities were enough to stop any air attack.

The group has long been believed to be a cover for the LTTE in order not to embarrass Western countries where the LTTE have offices.

Meanwhile, troops moved out from Alaveddi, within newly regained territory, at first light Friday and "overcame resistance without much effort" with the loss of five men, a defence ministry said. Twenty soldiers were wounded.

The forces, backed by air and naval cover, advanced to Chunakam before returning to Alaveddi, the military said.

Radio transmissions by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said the fighting lasted for eight hours and that 2,400 troops had been deployed. Tiger Radio said the LTTE had lost four cadres, including three women.

At the same time, the armed forces fired shells from their bases at Palali and Mandaitivu Island, the radio said. A pro-government newspaper said Saturday Sri Lanka will likely hold elections if the latest government plan to end the island's separatist war fails.

The sweeping political reforms proposed by President

Kumaratunga to resolve the ethnic conflict must win a two-thirds majority in parliament.

The president planned to dissolve parliament and call fresh polls if she was unable to get the vital backing of the opposition United National Party (UNP), the pro-government Ravaya weekly said in editions to be released Sunday.

An advance copy obtained Saturday said the government believed it could improve on its one-seat majority in new elections, making the peace issue central to its campaign.

Mrs. Kumaratunga declined to answer questions about election plans.

"We will answer that at the right time," she said.

In a separate development, mystery shrouded the recovery of 16 bodies from lakes in and around Colombo in the last three months.

Police refuse to say anything on the identity of those killed or the motive behind the crime. The victims are men in the age group 35-40.

In the latest incident, two highly decomposed bodies were fished out Friday from the Diyawanna Lake near parliament building, police said.

Early this week, police found three bodies, two in the Hamilton Canal north of the city, and one in Bolgoda Lake where 11 decomposed bodies were found in May and June.

Bolgoda Lake is a popular tourist resort, 25 kilometres (15 miles) south of the Sri Lankan capital.

Some of the victims had mutilated sexual organs, while some were found with their hands tied, police said.

Kashmir militants ease demands, say hostages sick

SRINAGAR, India (R) — Kashmiri militants holding five Western hostages lowered their demands Saturday and said three ailing captives could die unless they quickly received better medical treatment.

A statement delivered to an international news organisation said the Al Faran militant group now wanted India to release 15 jailed separatists instead of 21 in exchange for the captive tourists.

Al Faran said it would not release the hostages unless its demands were met.

"However, it has made its demands flexible so that instead of 21 prisoners it is now demanding the release of only 15," said the statement, written in Urdu and dated Aug. 5.

At the outset of the month-long hostage crisis Al Faran demanded that New Delhi free 21 separatists who had been jailed for fighting against Indian rule in the troubled region.

Police and hospital officials say more than 20,000 people have died in the five-year-old rebellion.

The Al Faran group also issued a tape cassette on which a man who identifies

himself as American Donald Hutchings said he and Briton Keith Mangan had been shot in a clash between their captors and the Indian army, and that Mr. Mangan was in a "very critical" condition.

The militants attached two colour photographs. One, with Mr. Mangan's name on the back, showed a man lying down with blood oozing from a bandage around his chest and shoulders.

The other photograph, with Mr. Hutchings' name on the back, showed a man with blood near his waist. There were no dates on the pictures.

Mr. Hutchings said on a poor quality tape recording that he had been shot during an Indian army attack on the militants who in the mountains. He did not say when the attack occurred.

"I do not have the strength to speak much," he said. "But I think Keith is very critical with many wounds and a broken leg."

On July 21 Al Faran said two of the hostages had been injured in a clash with Indian security forces. India denied there had been any fighting.

Two days later the militant group, which has periodically sent messages to news orga-

nisations, said one of the wounded hostages was in a serious condition.

"We have no medicine. The time is very dangerous for us," Mr. Hutchings said on the tape-recorded message, which was not dated.

The Al Faran statement said two foreign tourists whom it did not identify were injured in a clash with the Indian army, and one was in a critical condition. German Dirk Hasert was also ill, it said.

"The condition of the three is deteriorating by the day. They have stopped eating anything which has further affected their health," it said.

"If they don't get better medical care immediately, they may even die, for which the government will be responsible."

"If the governments of the respective countries want the safe release of their nationals, they should put pressure on the Indian government."

Mr. Mangan and Mr. Hutchings were captured on July 4 along with Briton Paul Wells and American John Childs while trekking near Pahalgam, 90 kilometres from Srinagar, summer capital of the northern Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Al Faran militant group abducted Mr. Hasert and Hans-Christian Ostro of Norway four days later, hours after Mr. Childs managed to escape unharmed.

Some 5,000 heavily guarded Hindus defied death threats from Muslim guerrillas Saturday and embarked on an annual pilgrimage to a mountain cave in Kashmir.

The pilgrims left Jammu, winter capital of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, under tight security ordered by authorities to guard against attacks from Muslim militants.

The Harkat-ul-Ansar separatist group has warned Hindus not to participate in the pilgrimage and claimed responsibility for two bomb blasts which killed 18 people in Jammu last month.

The group's threat was in protest against the 1992 demolition of a 16th century mosque by Hindu extremists in the northern Indian city of Ayodhya.

On Wednesday, a paramilitary trooper was killed when militants detonated a land mine on the route leading to the cave, sacred to the Hindu god, Shiva.

White House threatens veto of defence bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Clinton administration has threatened to veto the 1996 defence authorisation bill unless "unacceptable provisions" for a nationwide missile defence are deleted or sharply modified.

"In our view, these provisions, if enacted into law, would effectively abrogate the ABM treaty," National Security Adviser Anthony Lake said in a letter to the Senate leadership Friday.

Meanwhile, however, the Senate dealt the White House another setback in the nuclear weapons arena. By a 56-44 vote it defeated an amendment to bar small-scale underground test explosions.

Sen. Strom Thurmond chairman of Senate Armed Services Committee, said the tests were "the only tool left to assess the capability of the shrinking nuclear stockpile."

"We need to do this," Sen. Thurmond said. "We're living in a dangerous world."

The veto threat was fortified by the close votes on so-called hydrocarbon tests — those with a yield of less than 4 pounds (1.8 kilograms). TNT equivalent — and on an antimissile defence, which was approved 51-49 Thursday night. Overriding a presidential veto requires two-thirds of the Senate and House.

"Let me be clear," Mr.

Kake said, "Unless the unacceptable missile defence provisions are deleted or revised and other changes are made to the bill, bringing it more in line with the administration's policy, the president's advisers will recommend that he veto the bill."

Earlier, Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota said the Senate's endorsement of a missile defence plan flew in the face of the 1972 anti-ballistic missile treaty with Russia and could touch off another arms race.

"If you loved the cold war you'll love this defence bill," Sen. Daschle told reporters as the Senate resumed debate on the measure. "I can't for the life of me understand why the Republicans want to go back to the bad old days of arms escalation."

A final vote on the bill was stalled late Friday night when Democrats indicated they still planned to offer some 60 amendments.

"It's clear to the leader that there is no intention to pass this bill," said a frustrated Senate majority leader Bob Dole, who postponed further debate on the measure until Saturday afternoon.

The State Department accused the bill's proponents of usurping the executive branch's authority regarding treaties and said action would

have the effect of abrogating the accord.

"We were deeply disturbed by this vote," spokesman David Johnson said.

The treaty, which sharply limits defenses against missiles as a way of discouraging a nuclear attack, is a bedrock of strategic stability, the official said.

The theory behind the treaty is that a potential aggressor would hold fire rather than risk a devastating retaliatory attack — one that could not be prevented for a lack of an antimissile defence.

The Clinton administration adamantly opposes the plan to build a nationwide network of antiballistic missile defences, and Sen. Daschle said he would urge the president to veto the measure.

The Senate had voted to retain language in its 1996 defence authorisation bill that directs the Pentagon to set up a multi-site missile defence system by 2003 and unilaterally defines the kind of antimissile systems that should be allowed under the 1972 ABM treaty.

Senate Republicans, while denying they were violating the accord, said it was time to reassess the cold war treaty, which left both the United States and the Soviet Union vulnerable to nuclear attack.

concept known as mutual assured destruction.

"The bottom line is that the bill recognises... that mutual assured destruction, the doctrine underlying the ABM treaty, is not a suitable basis for stability in a multi-polar world," Sen. Dole said.

A second setback followed Friday with defeat on an amendment to prevent hydrocarbon tests, which advocates say can help ensure the potency of the plutonium part of enriched U.S. nuclear weapons.

Mr. Clinton has continued a moratorium ordered by former President Bush and all U.S. nuclear weapons tests while pursuing negotiations for a worldwide accord. Some Pentagon and State Department officials want to conduct some tests to ensure the U.S. nuclear arsenal is reliable. Opponents say computers serve that purpose.

By a vote of 51-46, senators refused to trim an additional \$7 billion from the overall bill. And, they overwhelmingly defeated, 70-26, a burden-sharing amendment requiring the nation's European allies to shoulder a greater share of the cost of stationing U.S. troops there.

Among the amendments agreed to late Friday was a one-year moratorium on the United States' use of land mines.

Yeltsin may return to work tomorrow

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin may return to work by the Kremlin Monday after a mild heart attack, a spokesman said Thursday.

"He is feeling well. He has fully completed his course of rehabilitation," the spokesman said.

He did not say which, if any, other dates were being considered for Mr. Yeltsin's return to the Kremlin.

Yeltsin, 64, was taken to hospital on July 11 with what he later described as a mild heart attack. He has

already left hospital and has been recovering in a sanatorium just outside Moscow.

Mr. Yeltsin has been working from the sanatorium and showed no visible after-effects of his heart problems when he gave a televised speech to the nation Thursday.

5 killed in new Karachi wave of violence

KARACHI (Agencies) — At least five people were killed Saturday in a new wave of political violence that has struck the Pakistani port city of Karachi, bringing the death toll this month to more than 30, police said.

They said the bullet-riddled bodies of two unidentified young men were found in the eastern Koranhi area. They had been stuffed inside sacks with their hands and feet bound.

Three deaths were also reported in east, west and central districts. The political affiliations of the victims were not immediately known.

Witnesses said parliamentary Rangers and police cordoned off parts of the Koranhi area early Saturday morning and searched houses for the recovery of weapons and arrest of militants.

The government blames most of the violence on the

Mohajir National Movement (MQM) which speaks for the Urdu-speaking Mohajirs who migrated from India at partition in 1947.

News-papers said there were more than 100 arrests in several raids at the houses of MQM workers and activists in various parts of the city.

Gunfire incidents were also reported in the volatile central and eastern districts, considered to be MQM strongholds.

The government wants the MQM to give up arms, surrender activists wanted for various crimes and clarify its political policies.

The fresh wave of violence began after four MQM activists were killed in a police encounter Wednesday.

More than 1,250 people have been killed in political and sectarian violence in Karachi so far this year compared to 800 last year.

The three mutilated bodies

found Saturday were a warning to would-be police informers, police said.

They said the bodies contained notes identifying them as informers and warning people against collaborating with police.

The slaughter of alleged informers has risen dramatically since July when police launched an operation to flush out ethnic militants from Karachi's violent western and central neighbourhoods, police said.

They said at least 20 bodies have been found in the past month, all of them containing notes identifying them as police collaborators.

On Friday the bodies of two more alleged informers were found, chopped up into several pieces and stuffed in the trunk of a car abandoned in Karachi's troubled Orangi district.

Also Friday six people

were killed in separate incidents elsewhere in the city.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's government has been unable to stop the violence. Earlier police said they were stymied by a lack of cooperation from people in the affected neighbourhoods.

In July Mrs. Bhutto ordered Karachi's security force to regain control of neighbourhoods it had lost to ethnic militants, who had dug trenches and taken up positions on rooftops.

Thousands of weapons were confiscated in the police operation and dozens of alleged militants killed, police said.

Last week Interior Minister Nasrullah Babar told reporters police had restored calm to several neighbourhoods largely because people had begun to speak out. He didn't explain why the change of heart.

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Features

JORDAN TIMES, SUNDAY, AUGUST 6, 1995

Tell Jawa: A fortified Iron Age town on the edge of the Ammonite kingdom

Text and photos
By Rami G. Khouri
Special to the Jordan Times

SIX SEASONS of excavations at Tell Jawa, south-east of Amman, directed by Canadian scholar P.M. Michele Daviau of Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada, have uncovered the substantial standing remains of a large town that was heavily fortified and extensively used during the Iron Age period, some 3,000 years ago — but a town that may soon disappear forever, because of the complexities of reconciling the conservation of our ancient heritage with the demands of contemporary urban expansion.

Tell Jawa is located on a strategic hilltop in the growing residential suburb of Yadaouda, about a kilometre due east from Kan Zaman. It enjoys fine panoramic views in all directions. The airport tower is visible to the south, Madaba to the west, and the Amra Hotel to the north. This strategic position along the southern flank of the ancient kingdom of Ammon probably explains why it was initially settled in the early Iron Age, circa 1200-1100 BC, and why it was heavily fortified with a massive town wall in the Iron Age II period, around 900-650 BC.

The site was abandoned sometime in the 7th or 6th century BC, at the end of the Iron Age, and was not reoccupied until the Umayyad period in the late 7th century AD — at least this is the site's occupational history based on the evidence from the excavated areas within the two hectare site. Most of the Tell has not been excavated, because permission could not be obtained from all of the land's private owners.

It is possible that the site was settled at other times in the 1300 years between the late Iron and the Umayyad eras, though this seems unlikely because only Umayyad and Iron Age pottery has been obtained from the surface surveys at the site. When he visited the site in 1933, the American scholar Nelson Glueck mentioned that it was being cultivated, which means that any pottery on or immediately below the surface would have been well mixed together and dragged all along the surface of the site — indicating that an occupation gap in the pottery from the survey surely represents an actual gap in the history of the site.

Why the site was abandoned at the end of the Iron Age is not yet known. There is no evidence of burning which might suggest earthquake damage, though the presence of many arrowheads could indicate that battles took place at the site. In most buildings, the upper stories collapsed into the lower stories and filled in the ground floor rooms. In some cases crushing and killing people who were caught in the town's final catastrophe.



Part of the casemate fortification wall at the north-west corner of Tell Jawa, looking north towards Amman

Reconstructing Ammonite urbanism

The excavated areas have revealed a series of structures that will increase scholars' understanding of construction techniques and urban layouts in the Iron Age; this period is quite well represented in Jordan, but rarely has an entire walled town such as this been available for excavation.

Along with learning more about building techniques and material culture in the Iron Age, Dr. Daviau and her colleagues also seek to determine the Tell Jawaite's political, economic and cultural relationships with the Ammonite capital and heartland of Rabbath-Ammon (modern Amman) and nearby Iron Age settlements at well-documented sites such as Tell Umeiri, Hisban and Sahab.

The most impressive feature of the ancient town is probably its outer fortification wall. It has been excavated at several points to reveal a casemate wall that is nearly six metres thick in some places. Typically, it comprised a two-metre-thick outer casemate wall made of large boulders nearly a metre long each, separated by a space of nearly two metres from an inner casemate wall. The inner and outer casemates were made up of rooms built against the main wall.

Towers were positioned along the wall in several places. One excavated tower along the west side of the wall measured nine by five metres, and now is separated from the wall itself by a gap of nearly a metre. This gap probably did not exist in antiquity, but does

today because the connection between the tower and the wall has disappeared over time. A cache of 25 iron arrowheads found next to the tower may well suggest its defensive purpose.

Along the southeastern edge of the site, Dr. Daviau's team found the basic casemate wall plus an additional buttress-like wall outside and downhill from it. She thought this may have been a logical point for a roadway to enter the city through a gate. The gate system appears to have been uncovered, but there is no roadway. Inside the gate area is a series of rooms with 1.3-metre-thick walls, next to a cobbled floor area — suggesting to Dr. Daviau that perhaps she has stumbled across a type of gate that is previously unknown from the Iron II period.

The casemate fortification wall is pierced otherwise only by some stone-built plastered water drains that led to cisterns, and a narrow opening along the north-west section of the wall — perhaps an emergency escape passage? In most areas where it has been excavated, the town wall had domestic and other structures built right up against it.

In the south-west corner of the town, adjacent to the inner face of the wall, is a courtyard that was used to recycle groundstone tools: 50-centimetre-long millstones that had broken into smaller pieces measuring around 30-40 centimetres were worked into hand grinders and other tools, of which some 120 were found in this area. In the north-west corner of the town is a series of domestic rooms

built right up against the wall. Here were found ovens, mortars, groundstone tools to prepare and process food, cooking pots, iron knives with wooden handles, bones of cooked animals, unfired clay loom weights, and a plastered area with small bins, probably to store food or other commodities. About 20 large pithoi (storage) jars have been found throughout the site.

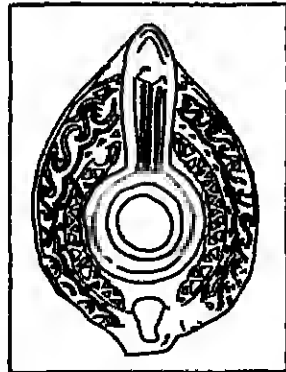
Two-storey houses prevalent

Most of the buildings inside the town were built almost entirely of stone, with only occasional evidence of mudbrick used on the upper sections of some interior walls. This could be due to the fact that many buildings were two stories high, with the ceilings of the lower stories comprising wooden beams and packed mud resting on rows of (usually three) stone pillars. In the only Umayyad period building excavated so far, large limestone slabs held in place by other heavy stones formed the ceiling, similar to the corbelling roofing technique that is so well preserved at Umm El Jimal in north-east Jordan.

"One of the things we do is study the different kinds of wall construction techniques, room sizes and building plans, and from this information we develop a better understanding of how Iron Age people lived and built their buildings," Dr. Daviau told the Jordan Times.

One large two-storey building with eleven rooms has two staircases still standing: this is thought to

have been the home of a wealthy person or an official, because it contained a variety of "high status" pottery such as red slipped and black burnished wares, and some unusual painted artifacts such as stoppers and vessels that look like cultic stands. On the ground floor of this building the excavators uncovered two tabuns (cooking ovens), a cooking area, a storeroom filled with craters, bowls, lamps, pithoi jars, unfired clay loom weights and many groundstone tools such as grinders, basalt pestles, mortars, mortar bowls with feet, pounders and other household implements.



An Umayyad period ceramic lamp from Tell Jawa (drawing by M. Beckmann)

The water system of the town is based totally on underground cisterns, due to the lack of a spring in the immediate area (the closest spring is four kilometres away). Some cisterns located outside the town walls were probably used to hold excess water when the cisterns within the walls were full.

One of the interesting issues that the team of

scholars working at Tell Jawa will try to clarify is its relationships with other Iron Age sites in the immediate vicinity, notably Tell Umeiri (located adjacent to the airport highway, about four kilometres to the west). It is assumed that both towns were part of the Ammonite kingdom, but this has yet to be firmly confirmed by the excavation evidence. One problem is that the political and cultural borders of ancient Ammon and Moab are not well delineated, and also changed over time. A strong piece of evidence for including Jawa in the Ammonite realm is a small figurine with an "Osiris" crown on its head, almost identical to the crowned Ammonite heads excavated in Amman.

Another problem is that comparisons are difficult because very few Ammonite urban sites (as opposed to the more plentiful towers) have been excavated and published, namely Umeiri, Sahab, Hisban, Amman citadel, and Safat (near Sweileh). The only evidence of ancient writing excavated at the site was a badly worn pottery sherd with a few barely legible letters in Ammonite script.

Umeiri continued to be inhabited in the late Iron II and Persian periods (circa 600-400 BC), when Jawa had been abandoned for some reason. The pottery evidence from both sites includes some parallels and overlaps, but the percentages of pottery forms differ: Jawa has more red slipped and black burnished wares, which suggests it is slightly earlier occupation date in the Iron II period, while Umeiri has more pottery from the ear-

lier Iron I period (circa 1200-900 BC). In the mid and late Iron II periods, both sites seem to be using similar types of pottery, suggesting that they were occupied at the same time, shared cultural and technological traditions, and probably enjoyed a peaceful relationship. This is also supported by parallels in the architecture at the two sites.

No attempt has been made to identify Tell Jawa with Ammonite sites that are known from literary sources such as the Bible and Assyrian texts, because there is not enough literary or archaeological evidence to associate the Tell with named ancient towns.

Umayyad period settlement

Evidence for the Umayyad settlement comes primarily from one excavated two-storey building near the centre of the tell, though other structures from this period certainly remain to be uncovered. Building techniques in the Umayyad building are very similar to those used at homes from the same period at Pella, in the north Jordan Valley. Outer walls were built of hewn, semi-hewn and unhewn stones in a "boulder-and-chink" style, with fill in between the boulders consisting of soil and small stones. Some walls included reused elements from earlier periods.

The central courtyard of the Umayyad building was paved with a plain mosaic floor, which may represent the earliest phase of construction, probably in the late 7th century AD. Artifacts such as copper coins minted in Damascus and

Ramla, painted ceramic vessels, lamp fragments and a glass lamp base confirm that the latest use of the building was in the late Umayyad period (8th century AD). The building may have been abandoned after the earthquake of 747 AD, as no conclusive evidence for occupation after that date has been discovered.

The Umayyad town also used an extensive water and agro-industrial facility located about 300 metres to the south, in an area where the natural bedrock rises out of the earth. Nine different installations have been identified at this site, including cisterns, caves, animal herding pens, a wine treading floor with associated settling basin, olive crushing systems, quarries and other facilities. Excavations of the cave and the treading floor turned up pottery that could be classified either as very late Byzantine or early Umayyad. The Umayyad use of the area is certain because a threshold in a door in a wall across the entrance of the cave is identical to a threshold inside the Umayyad building on the Tell. Given the peace and security that characterised the area at that time, it is not unusual to find such important economic resources located outside the town in an open area.

Uncertain future

If you would like to examine the remains of a walled Iron Age town close-up, you should plan to visit Tell Jawa soon. Despite its wealth of archaeological information from one of the most dynamic periods in Jordan's ancient history, Tell Jawa is unlikely to survive very much longer — because the private owners of the land adjacent to the Tell have started to build houses beside it, and a new road is being built through the western part of the Tell.

This highlights the dilemma facing archaeological conservation throughout the country: How to preserve and study ancient sites while also assuring the rights of citizens to use their land as they wish? Whether or not it helps to resolve this question, Tell Jawa has already contributed significantly to our knowledge of human culture, architecture and urbanism in the Iron Age.

The Tell Jawa project has been funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Wilfrid Laurier University, and private donations. It started six years ago under the auspices of the Madaba Plains Project that centres around Tell Umeiri, but has been an independent research project for the last four years. The work is sponsored by Wilfrid Laurier University, an disc carried out in Jordan in cooperation with the Jordanian Department of Antiquities and with the logistical support of the American Centre of Oriental Research.

Croatian Army

(Continued from page 1)

rights of all Serb civilians would be protected and all former fighters except those "involved in war crimes" would be pardoned.

With the cross-over of the Bosnian army into Croatia, wars in the two countries were solidly merged and threatened to draw in the powerful military of Serb-led Yugoslavia for the biggest Balkan battle since World War II.

Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic has so far held back, insisting on negotiations in his newfound role as peacemaker. But pressure was sure to mount from nationalists in Serbia and the army to join the fight, as the army did in the 1991 Serb-Croat war.

That six-month battle, which followed Croatia's secession from the Yugoslav federation, killed an estimated 10,000 people, displaced hundreds of thousands and left one-third of Croatia in rebel hands. Croatia has since reorganised and equipped its army despite a U.N. arms embargo.

Meanwhile, Egypt's Foreign Minister Amr Musa on Saturday gave implicit backing to Croatia's military drive

against rebel Serbs, saying Serb attacks on Muslims in Bosnia left no room for international sympathy.

"Sooner or later, he who kills gets killed," said Mr. Musa. "The Serbs leave no scope to sympathise with them under any circumstances after their behaviour and criminal attacks on the Bosnian people."

Egyptian Television said the government was launching a nationwide campaign to raise cash and humanitarian assistance for Bosnian Muslims.

It said prime minister Atef Sedki had instructed the Egyptian Red Crescent Organisation to supervise collection of donations in Cairo, Alexandria and Rural provinces.

Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl said that an escalation of the conflict in former Yugoslavia was possible but could be avoided, after Croatian forces launched an offensive against rebel Krajina Serbs.

"There is no military solution to this conflict. We must find a solution through negotiations," he told daily newspaper Bild in an interview. "It almost looks hopeless, but we must take every possible chance to negotiate peace," he said.

King urges

(Continued from page 1)

details of plans for building a conference palace in Aqaba. Also Saturday, King Hussein, accompanied by His Royal Highness Prince Hamzeh Ibn Al Hussein, made a tour of Aqaba and visited the headquarters of the Royal Navy and called at Aqaba municipality, where he met its mayor Riyad Al Helou and the municipal council members.

King Hussein voiced his full support and backing to the council's endeavours to develop services in the city and improve tourism sites.

Hizbollah

(Continued from page 1)

arm Hizbollah as a condition for a withdrawal from South Lebanon within the framework of a Middle East peace settlement.

The Lebanese government refuses to rein in the group before an Israeli withdrawal. But its relations are strained with Hizbollah, the only militia left over from the 1975-90 civil war that is still armed.

Rebel

Kurds kill

9 in Turkey attacks

ANKARA (R) — Rebel Kurds killed eight civilians, including two children under 10, and one soldier in separate attacks in southern Turkey near Syria, the semi-official Anatolian news agency said Saturday. The emergency rule governor's office in the southeastern city of Diyarbakir said troops had killed nine guerrillas of the rebel Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in separate clashes in the southeastern provinces of Bingol and Strnak. The figures cannot be independently confirmed. The eight civilians were killed and four more hurt in an overnight attack by the PKK in Hatay province, Anatolian said. Six of the dead were from the same family. "This is a massacre," said Hatay governor Utku Acun. In a separate incident in the same province on Saturday, PKK guerrillas killed one soldier and injured two others in an ambush on a military vehicle. Mr. Acun told Anatolian. More than 17,500 people have been killed in Turkey in the PKK's 11-year fight for independence or autonomy in the southeast.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Scandal-ruined BCCI founder dies

KARACHI (AP) — Agha Hasan Abedi, founder of the scandal-ruined Bank of Commerce and Credit International (BCCI), died Saturday in a Karachi hospital. He was 74. Doctors at the Aga Khan Hospital here said Mr. Abedi died of heart failure. He reportedly had not recovered consciousness since being admitted to hospital last Monday. Mr. Abedi's health had been failing since his heart transplant in 1988. Confined to a wheelchair, Mr. Abedi lived in virtual seclusion in his modest home in Karachi. Mr. Abedi's wife was at his side when he died, doctors said. He also is survived by one daughter, Maha. In one of the most spectacular banking fraud cases, international banking regulators shut down BCCI's world-wide operations on July 5, 1991. Mr. Abedi, however, had relinquished control of BCCI in 1988 following two massive heart attacks. He also suffered a stroke which resulted in brain damage and the loss of his voice. Labelled the world's most corrupt bank, the BCCI was linked to massive fraud and theft. It was connected to clandestine arms deals, financing of terrorists and laundering of drug money. Depositors lost millions of dollars as regulators seized BCCI's assets. Mr. Abedi, who dreamed of building a world banking empire to challenge the Western financial giants, steadfastly denied the charges. In 1994 he was convicted of fraud in abstentia in the United Arab Emirates and sentenced to an eight-year prison term. Pakistan refused to extradite him. The U.S. also sought Abedi's extradition, but Pakistan refused.

UAE starts tagging of threatened sea mammal

ABU DHABI (AP) — The dugong, a shy, seagrass-eating ocean mammal facing extinction, came under close scrutiny Saturday as a two-week-long satellite tagging expedition began. The tagging got under way in the Butini shoals about 150 kilometres along the coast of the southern Gulf emirate of Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab

Emirates. Jonathan Ali Khan, director of the Arabian Seas Expedition in charge of the project, said the dugong was important because it helped maintain the balance of seagrasses. The tagging, which uses a small radio transmitter to send a signal to satellites in earth orbit, will help scientists figure out the dugong's roaming patterns. According to the conservationist, the dugong population in Arabian waters is believed estimated at about 7,300 and is the second largest in the world. Australia has the largest number estimated at some 30,000.

Workers march across Ankara

ANKARA (AFP) — Thousands of public sector workers began a march across downtown Ankara Saturday to press for higher wages and improved working conditions. The march, organised by the Turkish Workers Unions Confederation (Turk-Is) and authorised by the government, gathered workers from across the country who came in busloads. However, police kept a close watch on the demonstrators, frisking them as they entered closer to the city centre. Hundreds of policemen were deployed, and armoured personnel carriers were stationed at road junctions. Carrying banners proclaiming: "We want our rights now, not in the grave," as well as other slogans, the marchers walked along a bridge crossing downtown Ankara. They included workers from the health, construction, military and food sectors. "Last year, the workers got a 25 per cent raise after demonstrations and strikes," said Bayram Meral, head of Turk-Is. Turkish law allows workers to go on partial strike and to stage demonstrations — on condition they obtain permission from local authorities. Turk-Is was pushing for a higher pay raise than the 4.5 per cent the government offered this year, which Mr. Meral said was insufficient to meet the inflation rate. Turkish official figures put this year's rate at 80 per cent. The workers were also protesting the government's privatisation plan and delays in paying compensation to laid-off workers.

New Saudi oil minister seen depoliticising sector

DUBAI (R) — The new Saudi Arabian oil minister is expected to focus on internal reorganisation and technical aspects, ending three decades of politicisation of the vital sector by his two predecessors, sources said Friday.

Veteran oilman Ali Bin Ibrahim Al Nuaimi, 60, became oil minister Wednesday in the first major cabinet reshuffle since 1975 in the world's largest oil producing and exporting country.

"His two predecessors over-politicised the sector," said a well-placed industry source.

"They were concerned with the politics of it and considered themselves political appointees."

Sheikh Nuaimi "is a hands-on technocrat and will concentrate on the technical side of the industry" and present his country's views at OPEC meetings, added the source.

King Fahd, who assumed power in 1982, will continue as the ultimate decision-maker with the final say in oil-related political decisions, especially at times of crisis.

Sheikh Nuaimi replaced Hisham Nazer, oil minister since 1986. The forceful Sheikh Nazer, one of the longest-serving oil ministers in the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), stood out among his 11 counterparts in the

group. Sheikh Nazer followed master showman Sheikh Ahmad Zaki Yamani, the longest-serving oil minister in Saudi history who held the post for 22 years and was in power during two world oil shocks.

Cutting operational costs, improving efficiency and raising income is at the top of Sheikh Nuaimi's agenda, industry sources say.

Riyadh's oil income has been falling since the early 1980s due to weak prices while spending remained high. It had a budget deficit of \$10.7 billion in 1994 and has a forecast \$4 billion shortfall in 1995 with total revenues envisaged at \$36 billion.

Projected 1995 oil income was put at about \$33 billion compared with \$11 billion in 1981 from crude exports of nine million barrels per day (b/d) and \$73 billion the following year when crude exports were about 5.6 million b/d.

Sheikh Nuaimi has "unfinished work in industrial projects, will look again at ARAMCO, the relationship with (Saudi Arabian industrial giant) SABIC, domestic price reforms, changing the pattern of domestic consumption and cutting operational costs," the well-placed sources said.

Sheikh Nuaimi joined the

state firm Saudi ARAMCO at age 12 as a messenger, becoming the global oil giant's president and chief executive after obtaining several university degrees, mainly from the United States.

ARAMCO, which is in charge of most of Saudi Arabia's eight million b/d crude oil production, has substantial refining and downstream holdings in North America, Europe and Asia.

The source said two ARAMCO deputy chiefs — Abdullah Jumma and Abdul Aziz Al Huqail — were high on the list of candidates to replace Sheikh Nuaimi in running day-to-day affairs of the company.

Industry sources say Sheikh Nuaimi was expected to push ahead with plans to promote the under-utilised gas industry, making gas readily available to SABIC, large enterprises and utility firms to free more oil for exports and raise revenue.

Saudi planners say Riyadh is eager to reverse an upward trend in power and fuel consumption patterns in the kingdom.

Domestic electricity consumption was rising at an alarming 20 per cent a year but has slightly slowed down in recent months due to an increase in power and fuel rates in January 1995.

Bank of England argues for interest rate rise to dampen inflation

LONDON (AFP) — British inflation is likely to exceed the official target of 2.5 per cent in 1997 unless interest rates are increased, the Bank of England has warned.

Any delay in increasing rates might mean that monetary policy would have to be tighter than would otherwise have been necessary.

The report highlighted a difference of emphasis between it and Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke about the need for, and timing of, any change in rates; and the bank acknowledged that they faced a dilemma in judging the signals.

The bank said in its quarterly report that underlying inflation, which excludes the cost of home loans, was "more likely than not" to be above 2.5 per cent in the middle of 1997.

The British government has committed itself to bringing underlying inflation to below 2.5 per cent by the spring of 1997.

A treasury official later parried the Bank of England's warning, maintaining that Mr. Clarke would set policy "to hit his inflation target."

Earlier in the month, the central statistical office reported that the 12-month rate for underlying inflation in June had risen to 2.8 per cent from 2.7 per cent in May.

The bank's report warned that "delay in taking action could ultimately result in interest rates having to go higher than would ultimately have been the case."

For the past three months Mr. Clarke has refused to raise interest rates from the current figure of 6.75 per cent against the advice of Bank of England Governor Eddie George.

The Bank of England is not independent from political control, as is the Bundesbank, and therefore does not have a free hand in setting

monetary policy. The Bank of France has independence in determining monetary policy provided that it takes account of the government's overall economic policy.

Mr. Clarke has defended his actions by saying a raise in interest rates would stifle faltering growth of the British economy.

His case was bolstered recently by a downbeat report from the CBI employers' organisation and GDP statistics showing that growth had slowed to 2.9 per cent in the second quarter of 1995 from 3.8 per cent in the first three months of the year.

But the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) said that interest rates in Britain might have to be increased this year to 7.75 per cent if the government were to meet its inflation target.

And the chairman of NatWest, Britain's second-biggest clearing bank, Lord Alexander argued that the government had to be prepared to tighten its monetary policy.

The Bank of England in its report acknowledged that the "dual nature" of the economy, in which inflationary pressures co-existed with a slowing of growth, had made the dilemma over monetary policy "more acute than ever before."

But it warned that because of the time lags between monetary policy and its effect on inflation, interest rate decisions had to be made before the "puzzles" (over the strength of activity, money growth and inflation) are fully resolved.

Economist generally hold that the full effects of changes in interest rates, as part of monetary policy, do not feed through into the entire economy for up to two years although some effects are held within a matter of weeks to months.

House votes to reform U.S. telecom industry

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved sweeping reforms in the U.S. telecommunications industry Friday, adopting the most comprehensive bill in 60 years.

The Republican-led House voted by 305 to 117 for the bill, which aims to loosen up competition for broadcast and telephone companies.

But the bill has been strongly criticised by Democratic President Bill Clinton, who has threatened to veto it on the grounds that it would benefit big business over consumers and quash alternative voices in the media.

The Senate passed a similar bill in June, but because its provisions are slightly different, the two congressional bodies will have to hammer out a common bill before a final version can be jointly approved.

"We'll have to review the bill when it gets in its final form," Mr. Clinton told reporters slightly before the vote was held.

Vice President Al Gore Thursday slammed the bill, describing it as "abhorrent to the public interest and our national economic well-being."

"This bill has been sold to the highest bidder in every telecommunications industry. The losers are the American people," Mr. Gore said in a statement.

The bill aims to deregulate cable television and local and long-distance telephone companies, allowing them to compete more openly.

But opponents say such competition will benefit only a few large companies, namely telephone and news and entertainment giants. Because of their size, these corporate behemoths would

soon dominate markets and then raise consumer prices, they charge.

Among the most significant changes is a provision that would eliminate restrictions on cross ownership of local media. This would allow, for example, a single company to own a cable network or television station along with newspapers and radio stations — all in one town.

"One person owning the majority of the media outlets in a community is a threat to the very system of democracy upon which our society is built," Mr. Gore said.

But the House also adopted an amendment to the bill to prevent any one company from owning television stations broadcasting directly to more than 35 per cent of all U.S. viewers.

The bill had originally called for increasing the present 25 per cent limit to 50 per cent.

Mr. Clinton welcomed the amendment, describing it as "a very important step."

The bill also called for scrapping all limits on radio station ownership.

Debate on the bill has helped buoy recent media mergers, including a deal announced Thursday by Chancellor Broadcasting Co. for the acquisition of 17 radio stations belonging to Shamrock Broadcasting Inc., for \$395 million.

The House also passed a package of amendments making it easier for regional telephone companies, known as "Baby Bells," to get into the \$68 billion a year long-distance phone business.

Baby Bells, seven in all, emerged from the breakup of AT and T, known as "Ma Bell," in 1982.

Depreciation of lira no relief for Turkish exporters

ANKARA (R) — Turkey depreciated its lira at a faster rate than inflation in July but exporters still complain that the currency is overvalued and hurting their business.

The first seven months of this year show the currency depreciated at a slower rate than inflation and analysts saw little chance of this trend changing.

"The real appreciation of the lira will not be corrected even if the central bank depreciates the lira in tandem with the inflation rate in the rest of 1995," said Professor Faruk Selcuk of Bilkent University.

The value of a currency basket of \$1 and 1.5 marks rose by 2.6 per cent in July against a 2.4 per cent increase in inflation measured with wholesale prices for the same month.

The basket rose by 23.2 per cent to 93,690 lira in the first seven months of the year while inflation went up by 34.9 per cent over the same period.

According to a report prepared for the Turkish Exporters assembly (TİM), Turkey may not be able to maintain rising exports unless the present exchange rate policy is altered.

The report said the overvalued Turkish lira would boost imports and squeeze exports. Its author warned the policy could eventually lead to speculative attacks on the currency.

"Now there is no risk of a crisis but the present policy is increasing the possibility," Professor Refik Erzan, who conducted the TİM study, told reporters.

According to real exchange rate indices, developed for Reuters by Professor Selcuk, the lira has been overvalued by 23.4 per cent against the dollar and 7.6 per cent against the mark over the past year.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, AUGUST 6, 1995.

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll-Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This is a good day to run around and keep any promises made to others and gain their goodwill. Be active.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Concentrate on financial and other material matters today and reach the right decisions on how to best handle them.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This is a good day to handle those personal affairs for which you have little time during busy work days.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) This morning is fine for meditating and analysing how far you have moved towards your goals and how best to proceed.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) This is a fine day to seek out your most influential friends who can be of great assistance to you in your career.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Endeavour to see that bigwig today who can assist you in whatever is most important to you tonight.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Be some place where you can gain information you need today and then discuss the future with wise individuals.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) This is a good day to see an expert who can give you information you need, so try to contact this person.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) This is a good day to talk with your partners and others so that you can make better arrangements for later tonight.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) This is a fine day for taking health treatments which you need to become more vigorous. Plan the new week wisely.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Early today set up appointments to see charming persons and have a delightful time with them tonight. Then do just that.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Spend as much time as possible today so that you can improve conditions there and establish more harmony with kin.

Birthstone of August: Peridot — Golden Quartz

Italian parliament votes pensions reform into law

ROME (R) — Italy's lower house of parliament Friday gave final approval to the government's cost-cutting pensions reform bill and the measure now becomes law.

The bill, designed to save some 100 trillion lire (\$63 billion) over the next decade, was approved by 266 votes to 92 with 125 abstentions, officials said.

It had been approved by the senate (upper house) Thursday but had to return to the lower chamber of deputies for a second reading because of amendments made to the original text during its senate passage.

Prime Minister Lamberto Dini had said he wanted the bill on the books before parliament rises for its month-long summer recess and achieved his aim with only a few hours to spare.

Former central banker Dini said the new system combined fairness with the necessity to cut costs.

"We could no longer put off reforming a pensions system that for two many de-

ved devoured resources and produced debts beyond control," Mr. Dini said in a speech thanking the lower house for its cooperation.

Mr. Dini, appointed in January to head a stop-gap government after media magnate Silvio Berlusconi was ousted as prime minister, has now virtually completed his limited programme.

He has said he will offer President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro his resignation when his term is complete, a step he is now widely expected to take in September after presenting the 1996 draft budget to parliament.

Mr. Scalfaro said Thursday that parliament would then have to decide whether to give Mr. Dini a firm new mandate to enact essential reforms to the country's democratic system and support him with a broad majority.

The president indicated that he would feel bound to dissolve parliament and call an early general election, four years ahead of schedule.

if such support was not forthcoming.

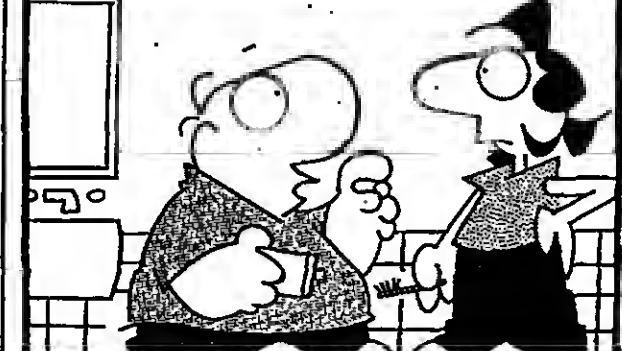
The Dini government can meanwhile enjoy its success in having overhauled the pensions system, an objective which has proved beyond a variety of governments which have attempted to grasp the nettle over the past 20 years.

Under the new law, nobody in Italy will be allowed to retire — a full pension unless they have paid contributions for at least 35 years. The threshold will rise gradually to 40 years by the year 2008.

However, some economists are not convinced that the new pension arrangements, which will switch to a contributions-based system rather than one based on earnings, do enough to wipe out a yawning deficit.

Italy's pensions system, one of the most generous in Europe, is in deficit to the tune of 70 trillion lire (\$44 billion) annually, equivalent to four per cent of the country's GDP.

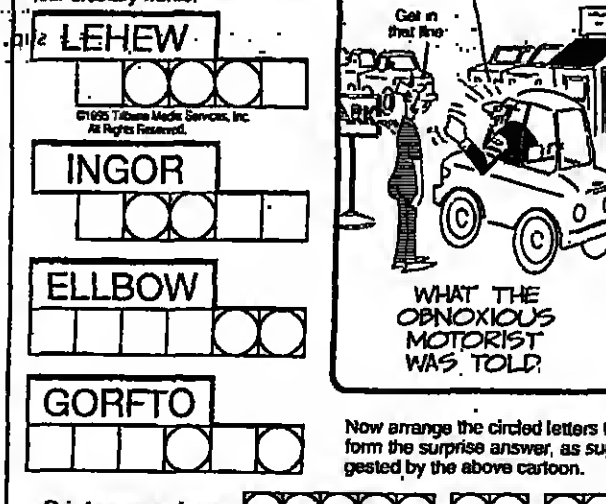
THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



"The first time I saw you, I had stars in my eyes. That damaged my eyesight and I've worn contact lenses ever since."

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Print answer here: _____
Saturday's Jumbles: AFIRE ENACT CHERUB MOROSE
Answer: Conductors do this all the time — FACE THE MUSIC

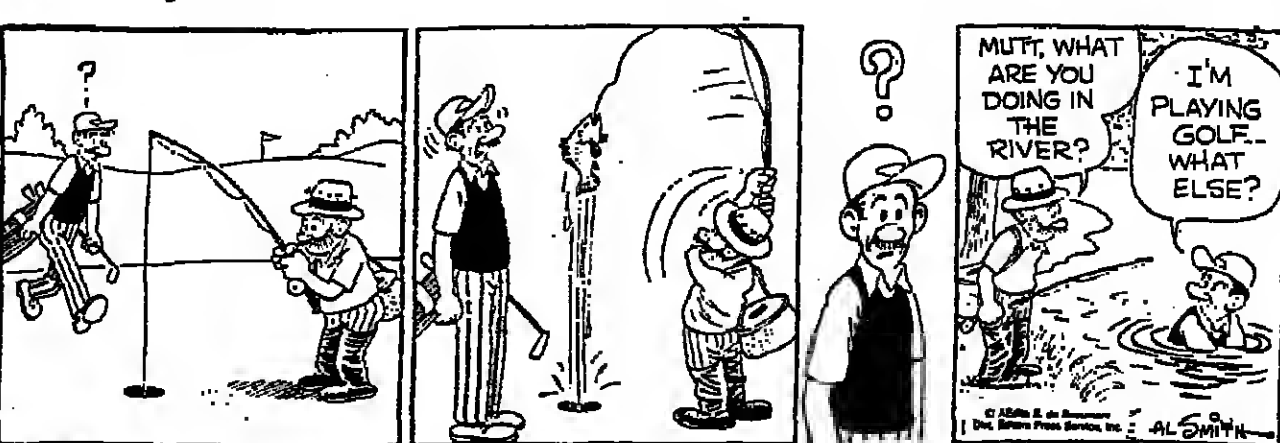
Peanuts



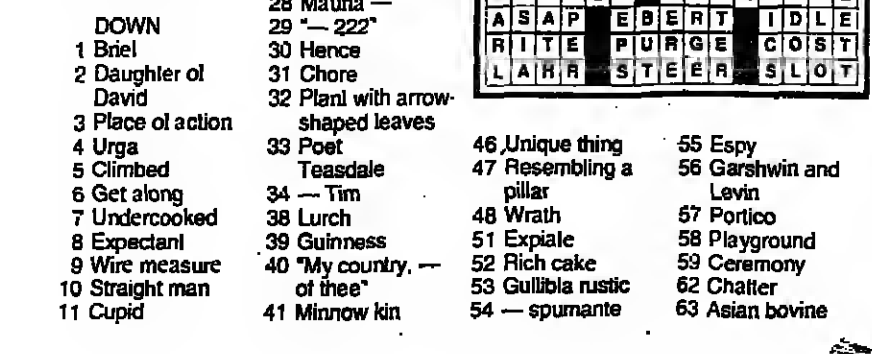
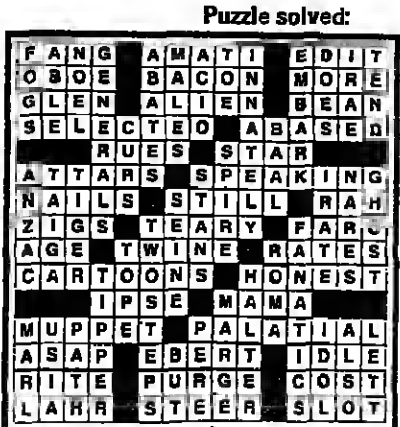
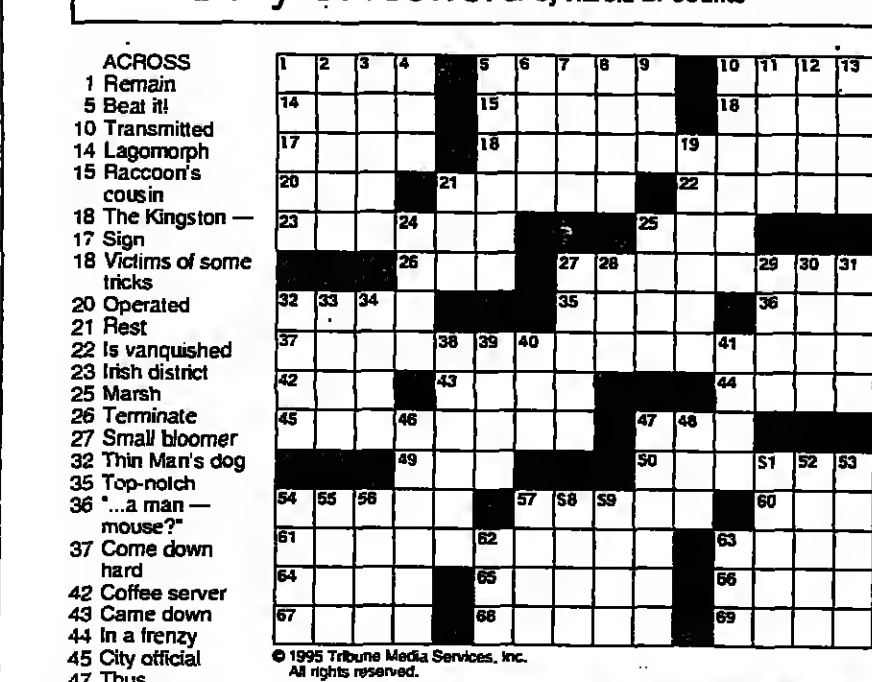
Andy Capp



Mutt'n Jeff



THE Daily Crossword by Harold B. Counts



Business Beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

Committee recommends government bear all losses of Royal Jordanian

THE SPECIAL committee entrusted to study changing Royal Jordanian into a public shareholding company recommended that the government should bear all the losses of the airline, amounting to JD 150 million, with the possibility of covering the losses in installments depending on the financial condition of the government. The committee also recommended, as another proposal, that the government take the necessary measures to reduce the airline's indebtedness to a debt/equity ratio of 2.33:1 or 70 per cent total liabilities to 30 per cent equity. Of the measures to be taken, the committee suggested capitalising some of the debts such as those of the Jordan Petroleum Refinery and the Social Security Corporation or settling the installments of the Airbus aircraft.

The committee's report pointed out that if the government opted for the debt reduction, the Royal Jordanian's capital should become JD 210 million, meaning that the government pays JD 290 million, of which JD 80 million would be the amount to cover the previous ownership rights. The report recommended that the government be charged with taking the necessary decisions to transform the airline into a public shareholding company whose shares would be fully owned by the government during a transitional stage. The shares would be sold later, once the airline's operations become positive and it is revalued under new conditions.

According to the report, the government should continue having shares in order for the state to continue issuing important and strategic decisions. "Also, the government should bear the cost or loss of any unprofitable route if it decides to keep it operating for non-commercial reasons."

The report suggested that the government should supervise and evaluate periodically the programme for change and the comprehensive structural development in addition to the performance of the airline's operations and standards. The report said the government should take the necessary corrective decisions and should continue to grant the new company all the privileges, exemptions and facilities, currently given to the airline, for the next 10 years.

The recommendations included conducting a comprehensive and strategic review of the route network, restructuring the network and, consequently, the adequate aircraft fleet, forming production units to be managed as independent projects, selling as much as possible of auxiliary production units and implementing the system and programmes related to cash flows and financial returns.

The report, proposed utilising the services of experts to implement programmes related to the airline's performances, financial and administrative control, reorganisation of planning and programming, information technology priorities, marketing planning and field sales, studying the management and the human resources potential, reconsidering purchasing policies and procedures and reducing the number of employees (Al Dustour).

★ RECENT STATISTICS show that the number of unemployed lawyers stands at between 3,000 and 4,000 and that requires a reconsideration of the Jordanian universities which teach law (Al Dustour).

India hints at salvaging \$2.8 billion Enron deal

BOMBAY (R) — India Friday held out the prospect of salvaging its largest foreign investment project as U.S. multinational Enron Corp. mullied its legal options after the announcement that its \$2.8 billion deal would be scrapped.

"When you get into a difficult situation, you find a way to get out of it. I'm sure something like that will happen," said Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao during a visit to Malaysia.

But Mr. Rao declined to say how the deal with India's western state of Maharashtra might be saved after the state government — run by a coalition opposed to Mr. Rao's nationally-ruling Congress Party — said it had scrapped it.

Vijay Kalantri, president of an industrial group called the All-India Association of Industries (AIIAI), Friday urged Enron to renegotiate the deal and take part in competitive bidding for the contract.

Enron said Thursday it was ready discussions with the Maharashtra government — India's most industrialised state which has Bombay as its capital — but state leaders appeared in no mood to negotiate over the 2,115 megawatt project.

"The case from Enron's side is very weak," said

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Gopinath Munde who headed a committee that recommended scrapping it. He told a news conference Friday that any claim for compensation for scrapping the contract would not stand up in court.

But Indian Power Minister N.K.P. Salve said in New Delhi that Maharashtra state's apparent reasons for cancelling the Enron deal were similar to arguments raised in courts which had already upheld the validity of the project's contracts.

Maharashtra scrapped the project because it said it was too expensive, the cost of power would be too high and there was no competitive tender.

Mr. Salve told parliament that the matter was essentially between the government of Maharashtra, its electricity board and the Dabhol Power Company formed by Enron and its U.S. partners General Electric and Bechtel.

But, he said, "the central government is directly concerned to the extent of its liabilities under the counter-guarantees given in favour of Dabhol Power Company and generally about the possible fallout of the decision of the Maharashtra government on the investment climate in India."

Enron Friday was focusing

on its legal options, but said that so far it had received no official notice to stop work on the first phase of the project, a 695-megawatt power plant costing \$920 million that is almost one-third complete.

"Work is continuing at the site as usual," an official of Dabhol Power Company told Reuters.

Enron and its U.S. partners are expected to file for damages of several hundred million dollars if the government formally nullifies the contract, legal sources said.

Legal experts said that unravelling the deal may be complex and messy. The Dabhol Power Co. has contracts with 150 suppliers each of which have their own legal implications.

While Enron says it has acted in full compliance with Indian laws, the Maharashtra government accused the Houston-based multinational of providing "misleading" information.

The project appeared to have fallen victim to India's internal politics.

Political analysts said the local ruling right-wing Hindu Alliance of the Shiv Sena and the Bahariya Janata Party (BJP) may have won good political capital through the move by being seen to stand up to a foreign multinational. National elections are scheduled for early next year.

Foreign-funded firms in China maintain rapid import-export growth

BEIJING (AFP) — Foreign-funded firms in China posted overseas trade volume of \$46.3 billion in the first half of 1995, a jump of 29.4 per cent over the same period last year.

Imports were up 23 per cent to \$27.36 billion, while exports surged 41 per cent to \$18.94 billion, the China Daily said Saturday, citing newly released customs statistics.

The export growth rate for foreign-funded companies was actually lower than the national average of 44 per cent.

Their import growth rate also slowed dramatically compared to the 44.5 per cent posted a year ago — a fact customs officials attributed to a sharp decline in the import of machinery as part of foreign investment.

The export of manufactured products by foreign-funded firms totalled \$17.8 billion in the January-June period — 43 per cent more

than a year ago — and accounted for 94 per cent of their entire export volume.

However, the officials admitted that the figures for the foreign-funded sector as a whole had a significant geographical imbalance.

Coastal regions all reported increases in the sector's foreign trade, while foreign-funded companies in nine of the country's 18 inland provinces saw their import-export volume slip.

Firms in the booming southern province of Guangdong led the country in terms of foreign trade volume, posting \$23.4 billion in the first half.

Hong Kong remained the largest market for export from foreign-funded firms, followed by the United States, Japan and the European Union.

Meanwhile, foreign banks in China posted net profits of \$79.75 million in the first six

months of the year — a leap of 120 per cent from the same period last year, the People's Bank of China (PBOC) said Saturday.

By the end of June, overseas banks operating in a 14 Chinese cities hoisted total assets of \$14.51 billion, according to the central bank's statistics.

Outstanding loans amounted to \$9.81 billion, of which 92.5 per cent were made to companies in China — most of them Sino-foreign joint ventures. Deposits grew to \$2.57 billion.

"It is remarkable for a bank to show a profit or balance its books in a new market within two years' time, but such is the case with most a senior PBOC official in charge of foreign bank affairs."

Trading volume at AFM stays thin

AMMAN (R) — Jordanian shares closed a touch higher at start of weekly trade Saturday in dull activity subdued by lack of institutional support, dealers said.

The index of the Amman Financial Market rose to 145.44 points, up 0.05 per cent from 154.37 on Wednesday.

The value of shares traded rose to 718,904 dinars from 704,978 dinars on Wednesday.

Trading was thin, with 530 contracts executed for 269,645 shares, with the market generally underpinned by demand on select industrial

blue-chips and some bank stock.

The market is also cash-short, with a spate of low priced new issues diverting funds from the official exchange to the primary market.

Dealers say lack of institutional buying in quiet summer trade was being worsened by investor uncertainty ahead of a full parliamentary debate on new economic laws the government wants passed before a regional economic summit next October in Amman. In industries, the leading

sector, two blue-chip drug firms saw some active trading: Dar Al Dawa Development and Investment shed 30 fil to 7,900 dinars. Arab Pharmaceutical Manufacturing shed 70 fil to 5,140 dinars.

Jordan Petroleum Refinery shed to fil to 10,450 dinars while Jordan Cement, more than 50 per cent owned, shed 10 fil to 3,800 dinars.

In banks, Arab Bank rose 250 fil to 214,300 dinars. Amman Bank for Investments, focus of recent activity, rose 10 fil to 1,090 dinars.

In services, market leader Jordan Electric Power, shed 10 fil to 1,690 dinars. United Middle East and Commodore Hotels rose again another 20 fil to 2,240 dinars.

Industrials dominated on turnover of 401,887 dinars and an index fall of 0.31 per cent. Banks had a 195,660 dinars turnover and an index rise of 0.20 per cent. Services trailed with volume of 120,003 dinars and an index rise of 0.54 per cent.

A total of 200,113 shares worth 127,899 dinars changed hands in the new issues primary market.

Euro Disney climbs out of the red

PARIS (R) — Euro Disney has announced its first profit since opening three years ago after packing its Theme Park near Paris with crowd-pullers like the space mountain thrill ride.

The company said net profit for the three months ended June 30 was 170 million francs (\$35.36 million), including an extraordinary gain of 84 million francs (\$17.47 million).

The company lost 546 million francs (\$113.6 million) in the year-earlier third quarter when fears that it might close down because of its financial woes reduced the number of visitors.

Euro Disney said the improvement reflected growth in revenue and operating margins as well as the debut of the holiday and other benefits from a financial restructuring last August.

"Given these results we have a chance of breaking even in 1995," a spokesman said.

Analysts said the results suggested a year-on-year rise in attendance of about 30 percent and deep cost cuts.

"It's further evidence that Euro Disney is a commercially viable concept — that there's nothing wrong with having put a Disney park in the Paris region," said David Klein at broker Natwest Sellick.

He and many other analysts crossed out their previous loss estimates and now predict a profit of around 50 million francs (\$10.4 million) at Euro Disney for the 1994/95 year.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET					
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OASIST MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 05/08/1995					
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	NEW CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE
JORDAN BANK PLC	260	55850	214,250	214,500	+0.12%
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	3064	10507	4,490	4,570	+0.18%
CITIBANK AMMAN	760	3428	4,510	4,510	0.00%
BANK OF JORDAN	3014	3,380	3,380	3,380	0.00%
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	11700	1454	1,260	1,260	0.00%
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	250	630	2,530	2,530	0.00%
JORDAN CITY BANK	3900	4467	1,140	1,140	0.00%
JORDAN SECURITIES BANK	2776	10449	3,760	3,760	0.00%
BUSINESS BANK	300	1155	3,820	3,850	+0.78%
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	777	3092	3,970	4,000	+0.76%
NETT EXCHANGE GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	4935	3,480	3,480	3,480	0.00%
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	73600	79987	1,080	1,090	+0.93%
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	760	1220	1,620	1,620	0.00%
BANKS SECTOR	100135	195660	INDEX NUMBER: 178.05	CHANGE: +0.20%	
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	500	1355	2,720	2,720	0.00%
INSURANCE SECTOR	500	1355	INDEX NUMBER: 128.44	CHANGE: +0.05%	
VEHICLES OWNERS FEDERATION	24772	58849	INDEX NUMBER: 170.00	CHANGE: +0.54%	
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	492	2722	5,400	5,510	+2.04%
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	6007	6007	2,240	2,240	0.00%
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	600	815	1,200	1,200	0.00%
JORDAN PRIMA FOUNDATION / ALARA	1200	11880	9,900	9,900	0.00%
JORDAN WEDDING BART & CONDOLENCES HOTELS	2450	32715	2,220	2,240	+0.90%
ARAB ENTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	200	648	3,220	3,240	+0.62%
JORDAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	3700	5180	1,400	1,400	0.00%
SERVICES SECTOR	58476	120003	INDEX NUMBER: 128.57	CHANGE: +0.54%	
JORDAN TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	200	5420	28,500	27,100	-4.91%
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	44227	92200	3,810	3,800	-0.26%
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	3469	10539	3,050	3,050	0.00%
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	6191	64708	10,480	10,450	-0.29%
THE JORDANIAN COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	850	2805	3,330	3,300	-0.90%
THE JORDAN WORTED HILLS	350	4191	7,640	7,610	-0.39%
JORDAN PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	7648	36908	5,210	5,100	-2.11%
JORDAN CEMENT INDUSTRIES	574	3335	5,850	5,850	0.00%
THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING	690	1664	2,580	2,560	-0.77%
JORDAN WEDDING BART & CONDOLENCES HOTELS	544	2096	3,850	3,850	0.00%
WAFIA INDUSTRIES	2550	6142	2,530	2,580	+1.98%
DAR AL DAWA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	9750	77289	7,930	7,900	-0.38%
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	2850	2128	750	750	0.00%
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRIES	1200	9038	5,340	5,320	-0.37%
LEVESTOCK & POOLTRY	7350	3053	4,480	4,480	0.00%
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	1150	1622	1,430	1,410	-1.40%
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	2850	2128	750	750	0.00%
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	5536	5930	1,080	1,070	-0.93%
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	1260	2838	2,260	2,270	+0.44%
JORDAN CEMENT INDUSTRIES	850	280	3,400	3,400	0.00%
ALABDI INDUSTRIES	1858	8339	4,350	4,350	0.00%
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JINCO	1260	763	6,620	6,610	-0.15%
NATIONAL CEMENT & WIDE MANUFACTURING	260	1193	4,470	4,470	0.00%
JORDAN SUPRO-CHEMICALS	000	1316	1,620	1,650	+1.85%
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	980	2081	2,220	2,200	-0.90%
JORDAN PAPER & CEMENT INDUSTRIES	600	942	1,550	1,570	+1.29%
UNIVERSAL JORDAN INDUSTRIES	14584	4942	3,400	3,400	0.00%
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	7400	10906	2,130	2,140	+0.47%
JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	760	1300	1,740	1,730	-0.58%
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	14200	19652	1,430	1,410	-1.40%
UNION CEMENTING & VEGETABLE OIL INDUSTRY	1650	3584	2,200	2,170	-1.36%
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	110534	401387	INDEX NUMBER: 130.87	CHANGE: +0.31%	
GRAND TOTAL	286445	718904	INDEX NUMBER: 154.44	CHANGE: +0.05%	
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET 200113					
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET 127899					

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Iraq hands U.N. data on germ warfare research Baghdad to 'do everything' to end sanctions

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq has given the United Nations a written declaration on its past biological weapons programme and stated determination to do everything to get U.N. sanctions lifted.

"The Iraqi side handed over a written declaration on its biological programme," Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) charged with disarming Iraq under the 1991 Gulf war ceasefire, told reporters on Saturday.

He said the declaration included the history of Iraq's biological research programme and a technical description of what had been achieved.

The Iraqis, he said, also provided documents in support of their claim that they had destroyed the biological weapons they had produced along with related research equipment.

"That is of course a matter which has to be verified," he added. Furthermore, meetings were planned with senior Iraqi officials on Saturday, Mr. Ekeus said.

Asked how he described Iraq's declaration, Mr. Ekeus said Saturday: "Well, it is a history of the programme and it is a technical description of what has been achieved and there is some documentation added to the declaration supporting some of the statements they made in the declaration."

He said Iraq insisted it had

destroyed its germ warfare programme, "a matter which has to be verified."

"The Iraqi side explained that what they have produced (in biological weapons) has been destroyed. That is a statement. Of course, it is a matter which has to be verified," Mr. Ekeus added.

The government newspaper Al Jumhuriya said in a front-page editorial Iraq was determined to do everything possible to end the U.N. embargo imposed for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"We confirm to everyone that Iraq has made up its mind to put an end to sanctions as quickly as possible, using various means and methods," the paper declared.

The declaration is the first written document handed to the U.N. on biological weapons since Iraq admitted last month that its research in this area was geared for offensive purposes.

The biological file is the last remaining issue between Iraq and UNSCOM, which has said it would not recommend a lifting of a U.N. ban on Iraqi oil exports unless it was satisfied with Iraqi disclosures and verifications of past activities.

Iraq has warned that it will halt cooperation with Mr. Ekeus if he does not end his mission by the end of August. The envoy said closing the biological file would depend on the quality of Iraqi de-

clarations and how quickly his experts carry out verification.

The government newspaper also slammed U.S. President Bill Clinton for saying the United States would not lift the sanctions until Baghdad fully adhered to all post-Gulf war resolutions. It seemed Iraq's conflict was not with the U.N. Security Council but with Washington, the newspaper said.

Praising Mr. Ekeus for saying the lifting of sanctions was the responsibility of the council, Jumhuriya said: "It (Iraq) is serious in its readiness to cooperate with various parties and respect their vital interests provided they are legitimate."

Commenting on Mr. Clinton's remarks, Mr. Ekeus said after arriving in Baghdad on Friday that all members of the council should decide on the sanctions, not only the United States.

In Washington on Thursday, Madeleine Albright, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., said Iraq could not be trusted to volunteer full data on its biological warfare stocks. She said Baghdad had admitted to producing enough agents to kill every man, woman and child on Earth.

She said Iraq's biological warfare programme was begun earlier than it had admitted and involved more biological agents and more facilities and people than had been revealed.



KING RECEIVES TOKEN GIFT: His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday receives a token gift from the Aqaba mayor and members of the city's Municipal Council (Petra photo)

U.S., Vietnam pledge new era of peace despite bitterness of the past

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Acknowledging the bitter past but pledging to open a new era of peace, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Manh Cam signed letters of diplomatic recognition Saturday.

"We have concluded the time has come to renew our ties and move forward into a new era," Mr. Christopher said after raising a glass of champagne to Mr. Cam.

But Mr. Christopher also gave a look backward, saying that establishment of relations had been made possible only because of the efforts of both sides to account for Americans still missing from the war.

"On behalf of all Americans, I express my gratitude to the many who helped in this important and noble endeavour," he said.

Mr. Cam stressed that the new relationship must be one of "mutual respect, equality and mutual cooperation," reflecting Vietnamese fears that friction may develop in the future over Vietnam's determination to keep its socialist system.

"I do hope relations will develop in a positive way in keeping with our expectations today," Mr. Cam said as the two men faced reporters from behind a green baize-covered table in the Oratoire, French-era state guesthouse.

Mr. Christopher is the first

U.S. Secretary of State to visit Vietnam since the war years of the 1960s and '70s and the first ever to go to Hanoi.

His visit opened with an airport ceremony at which he watched U.S. military personnel receive four wooden boxes containing human remains, possibly of Americans missing from the war.

The boxes were placed in aluminum containers that were then draped with American flags and loaded onto a force C-141 jets for a flight to an identification laboratory in Hawaii.

In a brief statement at Hanoi's Noi Bai airport, Mr. Christopher alluded to the dual themes of his trip, saying, "I am here to lay the basis for a better future, even as we continue to account for the past."

He expressed thanks for Vietnamese cooperation in locating remains of missing U.S. servicemen and said the fullest possible accounting "will remain the number one priority on our agenda with the government of Vietnam."

During his two-day visit Mr. Christopher was meeting with senior officials of the communist government and with U.S. business leaders eager to do business in Vietnam. He also was to officiate at the opening Sunday of the new U.S. embassy in the Vietnamese capital.

Mr. Christopher said he was appointed Desaix Anderson of the State Department

to be the first charge d'affaires in Hanoi pending nomination of an ambassador.

"Closer engagement is an America's interest, first and foremost to achieve the fullest possible accounting, but also because Vietnam is a vibrant country in a region of great importance to the United States," Mr. Christopher said in his arrival remarks.

"We can build a bridge of cooperation between America and Vietnam."

His arrival was an extraordinary moment in the troubled history between the two countries.

Immediately after World War II, the United States sought to help France maintain control of its southeast Asian colony. After the French were defeated and the country was divided between the Communist north and non-Communist south, the United States began a 10-year effort to save the south from being overrun by the north.

The effort cost some 58,000 American lives and killed untold numbers of Vietnamese.

But U.S. firepower and an intensive bombing campaign against the north were not enough. In April 1975, the last Americans were evacuated from Saigon and shortly after the North Vietnamese unified the country.

Mr. Christopher's military

adviser, Lt. Gen. Daniel Christman, recalled his service in Vietnam from July 1969 to July 1970 as a 101st Airborne Division company commander.

He said that like many others at the time, he counted the days and left with "a sense of relief."

This marks Mr. Christman's first return to Vietnam. He said he agreed with the decision to establish relations with the former enemy, but he conceded that "doesn't mean we don't go back with a great deal of memory and some pain."

Before going to Vietnam, Mr. Christopher spent a day in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, to get a firsthand look at a country that suffered terribly on the margins of the Vietnam War.

After the United States left Saigon in 1975 and the north Vietnamese unified the country, Cambodia was taken over by the Khmer Rouge guerrillas, a radical Communist group blamed for the deaths of more than 1 million Cambodians between 1975 and 1979.

Mr. Christopher also met with government officials and promised to press for congressional approval of most-favoured-nation trade status for Cambodia as well as to maintain the current level of foreign aid to the Southeast Asian country. Cambodia is receiving \$40 million in the current fiscal year.

Bashir says: Egypt wants to control Sudan

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt has tried to control neighbouring Sudan ever since the Islamic leadership in Khartoum came to power in a 1989 coup, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir charged in an interview published on Saturday.

He told the London-based Saudi newspaper Ash-Sharq Al-Awsat that Egyptian officials "cannot come to terms with the fact that Sudan has an independent leadership and they want a role in all its policies."

The Egyptian government "wants a regime at its disposal that it can guide as it wants, to the right or the left," the president said. It wanted to name a political adviser in Khartoum when the Islamic leadership took power in 1989, he added.

Mr. Bashir also criticised the Arab League for its failure to mediate between the two countries over the disputed border region of Halaib, following Egypt's accusations Sudan was behind an attempt on President Hosni Mubarak's life.

"If the Arab League does not budge when conflict between two countries leads to armed incidents, when will it?" he asked.

Khartoum, which denies any role in the abortive assassination attempt on Mr. Mubarak in Addis Ababa on June 26, says a soldier and two of its policemen were killed in clashes with Egyptian troops in Halaib within a week of the attempt.

The president said that Washington's decision in 1993 to add Sudan to a list of countries allegedly supporting international terrorism was based on "reports from the Egyptian intelligence services."

Sudan was prepared to accept "visits to regions where the so-called terrorist training camps are located," he said.

Mr. Bashir also said that relations with the Gulf Arab monarchies, strained by Khartoum's support for Baghdad in the 1990-1991 crisis after Iraq invaded Kuwait, had improved.

Paris blast probe focuses on Algerian militants

PARIS (AFP) — Nearly two weeks after a bomb killed seven people on a packed Paris subway train in France's most deadly terrorist attack in a decade, new evidence points towards Algerian-linked fundamentalists.

No credible claims have been made for the attack, but the so-called Islamic connection now all but dominates inquiries into who planted the bomb which ripped apart an evening rush-hour train at Saint Michel Station on July 25, killing seven and injuring more than 80.

In particular detectives are looking into a Belgian connection in the attack after discovering that the camping gas canister used fitted Belgian specifications, rather than French ones.

The information increasingly tends to confirm detectives' worst fears: that the blast is the work of Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the most hardcore group struggling against the government in France's former North African colony.

French anti-terrorist detectives have officially refused to rule out any theory for the blast, which for several days threw Paris into a state of tension reminiscent of the mid-1980s when a 10-month wave of Iranian-linked attacks left 13 people dead and more than 300 injured.

Initial speculation as to the perpetrators was shared equally between Muslim

fundamentalists and Serbs angry at French President Jacques Chirac's hardline stance in Bosnia.

But evidence pointing towards Algeria has been building.

The first indications were eyewitness accounts from passengers on or near the targeted train. One passenger reported a "North African looking" man running away from the train at Chatelet, the stop before Saint Michel, minutes before the blast. He allegedly made an obscene gesture.

Another said he saw two Arab men sitting in the carriage in which the blast occurred. As they got off at Chatelet one of them told his friend, "there will be a party at Saint Michel tonight."

Then the type of bomb pointed in the same direction: Scientists pieced together a 3-kilo camping gas canister into which explosives had been packed. The GIA is specifically known to have used such bombs in its violence campaigns in Algeria in the past.

At the end of last week the nearest investigation has come to a credible claim for the blast emerged in an underground Islamic fundamentalist newsletter, El Ansar, in Stockholm.

The leaflet, which has made claims of GIA attacks in the past, did not specifically say it was their work this time

Palestinian group identifies Tel Aviv suicide bomber

SIDON, Lebanon (AP) — A Muslim fundamentalist Palestinian group claimed he blew up an Israeli bus last month in a suicide attack said in a farewell statement released Saturday that victory against Israel could only be achieved through holy war.

A small fundamentalist splinter group, claimed responsibility earlier this week for the July 24 bombing near Tel Aviv in which six Israelis were killed.

It identified the suicide bomber as Jamal Fayez Youssef.

In Saturday's statement, faxed to media offices in this southern provincial capital, the group released what it said was Mr. Youssef's farewell address.

Mr. Youssef said the bombing was his "legitimate duty" and called for Palestinian unity to counter the Israelis.

"Unity is power and division is defeat," he said.

"Do not give up on Jihad because it is the key to conquest," he told fellow Palestinians.

Mr. Youssef said he was a 30-year-old Palestinian, married with three children and carrying a Jordanian passport. He lived with his family in the Palestinian refugee camp in the northern Jordanian city of Irbid.

(In response to a question about an Israeli newspaper report that the perpetrator of the attack came from Jordan, the government last week said it was not contacted by the Israeli government over the case.)

Earlier, claims circulated in Israel suggested Hamas had carried out the attack.

But these claims could not be immediately authenticated. Hamas had been held responsible for previous similar operations.

Sheikh Ahmad Mohanna, a Sunni Muslim cleric who heads Hezbollah-Palestine, criticised Hamas for claiming responsibility.

"We do not accept that the blood of any martyr be falsified and others take credit for our struggle," he said in an interview with the London-based, Arabic-language daily Al Hayat.

Hezbollah-Palestine is believed to have some 50 mostly Sunni Palestinian followers in Lebanon. It is not linked to Hezbollah, or Party of God, the Iran-backed Lebanese Shiite Muslim group which has been leading a guerrilla war against Israeli occupation forces in South Lebanon.

U.S. hosts Partnership for Peace exercises

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Soldiers from 14 former east bloc countries, Canada and Britain will begin arriving Sunday at a Louisiana military training centre for the first NATO-Partnership for Peace exercise on U.S. soil. Dubbed the Cooperation Nugget 95, the month-long exercise is designed to strengthen cooperation between forces in peacekeeping and humanitarian relief tactics, organisers said in a statement. Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, Slovenia and Poland were to send troops as were the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Ukraine and the central Asian republics of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are also participating in the exercise to be held at the Joint Readiness Training Centre at Fort Polk, Louisiana. The Partnership for Peace programme was adopted by NATO to strengthen cooperation between the western security alliance and countries of the former east bloc.

32 fishermen feared drowned in Bangladesh

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — At least 32 fishermen were feared drowned when four boats capsized in a storm in the Bay of Bengal, an official said Saturday. The fishing boats with 40 people on board were caught in rough weather off Barisal Coast on Thursday. Shaiful Islam, a local Red Crescent official said. Eight people were rescued by local villagers, Mr. Islam said. Rescue boats searched for the missing fishermen throughout Friday but without success. Mr. Islam said. Last month, 2 fishing boats were overturned by storm in the bay, killing at least 147 people.

9 Bangladeshi workers die in stampede

DHAKA (R) — A fire in a Bangladesh garment factory caused a stampede in which nine workers were trampled to death on Saturday, police said. Hundreds of workers fled down a narrow staircase when the fire alarm sounded in a nine-storey Dhaka building housing the workshops of two firms. FAA garments and Lusakha Garments. Nearly 100 people were hurt in the crush. The nine dead include four women, the fire itself damaged factory equipment, garments and cloth.

Police brace for punk invasion of Hanover

HANOVER, Germany (R) — German police thronged the streets of Hanover on Saturday to prevent an invasion by punks after an annual gathering of the scruffy youths turned into street battles overnight. Ninety-four police were injured in the clashes with up to 900 punks who had come from all over Germany for the festival, which has become known as "Days of Chaos." Punks wielding iron

bars built barricades with cars and set them alight, they hurled rocks and bottles at riot police, smashed shop windows and looted a supermarket. Police said some passers-by were also injured. Police used two water cannons to disperse the crowds and firefighters were called in to put out the blaze. Police said they expected as many as 2,500 youths to arrive in Hanover on Saturday, although local authorities had banned punks from entering the city and placed units of border guards on trains to prevent punks from getting off in Hanover. "Anyone who looks obviously like a punk, will not be allowed to enter the city of Hanover," said police spokesman Horst Kastens. Police units from outside Hanover were brought in to patrol the city. The punks called a news conference late on Friday after the clashes and said they had been provoked by an excessive police presence at an event which had never previously flared into violence on such a scale. "We built the barricades to protect ourselves from the police, who did not give us space," said one punk from Hanover, who did not give his name. "The way they were killed out, they were ready for deaths," he said. Police declined to say how many police were deployed, but witnesses said there were thousands of officers at the scene.

Iran turns guards into rapid deployment force

NICOSIA (R) — Iran said on Saturday it was turning its Revolutionary Guards, estimated at about 170,000, into a rapid deployment force. The official IRNA news agency quoted Major-General Mohsen Rezaei, commander-in-chief of the revolutionary guards, as saying: "Personnel are turning into rapid deployment forces." In what appeared to be an attempt to allay the fears, especially among Iran's Gulf Arab states, he described Tehran's relations with neighbouring countries as "good and friendly."

Iran hails Croatian attacks on Serbs

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran on Saturday hailed the Croatian army's offensive against Krajina Serb positions, hoping it would pave the way for a major alliance between Croatia and Bosnia against rebel Serbs in both countries. "It seems that Croatia and Bosnia now find themselves in a new situation and they could join the Serb aggressors," state-run radio said. It implicitly criticised Western countries as well as Russia for adopting a hasty position against the Croat military onslaught against the Krajina Serbs in Croatia. The attack had only come after "negotiations in Geneva failed" and in the wake of "U.N. inability to end the conflict" in the Balkans, the radio said. The Croatian army captured the rebel Serb capital of Knin, less than 48 hours after launching a massive offensive to end the secessionists' four-year-old independence drive, the Croatian defence ministry announced.

Major entangled in condom campaign row

LONDON (R) — A controversial British condom campaign has been furiously attacked by Roman Catholics in a row which has entangled Prime Minister John Major.

The prime minister is one of the listed supporters of the British Safety Council's safe sex campaign, which has featured a picture of the Pope on its promotional leaflets with the slogan: "Eleventh commandment — thou shalt always wear a condom." The Catholic weekly Universe newspaper has branded the campaign deeply offensive.

In an open letter to Mr. Major in its latest edition, the Universe demanded that he "explain to the Catholic community why you feel it right to associate yourself with the mockery of a much-loved and well-respected religious leader."

A Downing Street spokesman said Friday: "If there is a letter, we will be responding to it." "We have achieved what we set out to do — not to upset Catholics but to stimulate debate," said Fiona Harcombe, one of the campaign's organisers.

Researchers set world record on pi calculation

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese researchers have set a new world record in calculating pi, or the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter, taking the irrational number to the 3.22-billionth decimal place, Kyodo News Service said. The previous record was the 2.26-billionth decimal place set in 1991 by a group of researchers at Columbia University in the United States. The researchers included Yasumasa Kanada, an assistant professor at the University of Tokyo's Computer Centre, and Daisuke Takahashi, a graduate student at the university. Kyodo said. Although pi to the 3.22-billionth decimal place has no scientific value, "it is an attempt to work the computer to the maximum of its capacity," Kanada told Kyodo. "It will contribute to improving the method of scientific calculation." Kanada's group used a supercomputer at the university to twice calculate the number, taking 36 hours 52 minutes and 53 hours 43 minutes.

Dog bites Bonn environment minister

BONN (AFP) — A normally passive dog bit German Environment Minister Angela Merkel's leg while she was cycling in the countryside, causing an injury that required brief hospitalisation, police said. The incident happened near Eberswalde, in the federal state of Brandenburg, eastern Germany. Ms. Merkel, 41, was briefly treated in hospital for injuries to her thigh. The owner of the dog, a five-year-old bitch, said the dog had never bitten anyone before. "Lots of cyclists go by here, but until now she has never bitten anybody," he said. He said he even had given up using her for hunting because she was not aggressive enough, but he gave no reason why the environment minister had been singled out for the attack.

Beijing divorce rate reaches record 25%

BEIJING (AFP) — The divorce rate in the Chinese capital is reaching levels comparable to the West, with a record one in four marriages ending in breakup, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. The report said husbands are to blame in 70 per cent of the divorces, in some cases because they acquire girlfriends after becoming wealthy. In the other 30 per cent, wives were blamed for not respecting their in-laws and putting too many restrictions on their husbands. The Civil Affairs Ministry says that the highest divorce rates are among those who work in the arts and media and among the well-educated.

Sudan drops policy of entry without visas

KHARTOUM — Sudan on Sunday said it was dropping its policy of allowing entry to foreigners without visas, a move that would require them to obtain visas in advance. The decision was announced by the Sudanese government in a statement. The move was seen as a step towards normalising relations with the West, particularly the United States, which had long criticised Sudan's open-border policy. The statement said that the new policy would be implemented from January 1, 1996. It also mentioned that the government was working to improve its immigration and border control systems.

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